

CALLIOPE

The Student Journal of Art and Literature

Volume IX - Spring 2012

POETRY

1	Christina Grieco	Dead Poet Beau Monde	
4	Kyungbok Choe	Where I Am	
12	Melissa Martinez	Six-Legged Trek	
13	Peter Kim	Birth of a Poem: An Ars Poetica	
13	Vanessa Barrie	Summertime	
14	Cheri Jansen	Paint Brush	<i>Second Prize</i>
16	Vanessa Barrie	In our Tears	
19	Alice Masterson	Start Brunch the Night Before	<i>Third Prize</i>
19	Nathan Moore	A Son	
35	Elise Rossi	March 21	
43	Vanessa Barrie	Sharp Hospital	
47	Jonathan Ntuk	Ocean Land One Hand	
47	Jonathan Ntuk	Gullswoop	
50	Elise Rossi	Mood Quadrants	<i>First Prize</i>
68	Elise Rossi	Last Chance	
79	Melissa Martinez	Mom	
81	Nathan Moore	Back	

CREATIVE NON-FICTION

15	Hoang Truong	"Tous les Vous", a Special Café	
17	Virginia Keegan	A Phobic Encounter	<i>First Prize</i>
24	Migma Tamang	Travelling with a One-Way Ticket	<i>Second Prize</i>
37	Ahmet Yalcin	Hideout	<i>First Prize, ESL</i>
56	John Hazelwood	Maybe it's the Weather	
59	Jennifer Donaldson	A Walk in My Shoes	
64	Waleska Solorzano	The Garden of Eden	<i>Third Prize</i>
66	Loc Duc Duong	The Bridge of My Life	<i>Second Prize, ESL</i>
74	(Item removed for personal reasons)		
77	Hoa Quach	Bookstore: My Special Place	<i>Third Prize, ESL</i>

FICTION

5	George Steele	It Is a Good Life	
8	Shannon Hanchin	No Better Than Strangers	<i>First Prize</i>
29	Marques Hatfield	Of Deplorable Mention	<i>Second Prize</i>
44	Nathan Moore	The Bullets	
71	Robert Trexler	Voices of Strangers	<i>Third Prize</i>

FOREIGN LANGUAGE

36	Kevin Müller Cisneros	Cada vez que Lloro es Diferente	<i>Award</i>
46	Samantha Singh	Los Pasillos de la Vista al Mar	
62	Daniel Sota	Un Pensamiento	

ART

Kevin Müller Cisneros	Barraba's	<i>Cover Prize</i>
2 Brenda Santillan	Richmond	
3 Hyun-Jeon Kim	Different Perspective of Myself	<i>First Prize</i>
11 Frank H. Spink	Raku Handled Pot	
14 Kevin Müller Cisneros	Judy	
20 Ann Trinca	Last Supper Reinterpreted	
21 Hyun-Jeon Kim	Self Portrait	
22 Dexter De Torres	Pandora's New Friend	<i>Second Prize</i>
23 Cory Helms	The Driad	
26 Cory Helms	Moroccan Memory	<i>Third Prize</i>
27 Robbie Papetti	Ancient Artifact (from an Unseen Culture)	
28 Madeline Graham	Reflection	
34 Gofran Shaker	Islamic Architecture	
39 Frank H. Spink	Lowfire Bowl	
40 Monique Sommer	Gentle Love	
41 Sheila Ambrogne	Spouted Bottle	
42 Ann Trinca	Five Gum Rain	
48 Dong Phung Nguyen	Out of Balance	
49 Madeline Graham	G20	
54 Hyun-Jeon Kim	H1N1	
55 Sol Ryu	Deep Down and Under	
61 Kevin Müller Cisneros	Mute	
63 Scott Mitchell	Blue White Fishnet Spiral	
67 Angel Escudero	Motion	
70 Ann Trinca	Flowering Fins	
76 Hyun-Jeon Kim	Self Portrait	
78 Scott Mitchell	Blue White Fishnet Cup	

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calliope *kal<e>i:opi. U.S. (Gr. Kallioph)*

(beautiful-voiced), the ninth of the Muses,
presiding over eloquence and heroic poetry.

1. An instrument consisting of a series of
steam-whistles toned to produce musical notes,
played by a keyboard like that of an organ;

2. attrib. calliope hummingbird,
a hummingbird, sellula ***calliope***, of the
Western United States and Mexico.

Oxford English Dictionary



Christina Grieco

DEAD POET BEAU MONDE

I spent the afternoon with dead poets;
On the couch we chatted over coffee,
And through the window the wind blew outside.
It was then that a poet wept and cried.

Should the weather move me as such,
I will be a writer just as much.

I handed him a handkerchief, as it seemed polite.
As it grew darker, I turned on the light.
And through the window the storm blew the trees.
I settled back down into conversation.
All eyes were on me.

“Do you require a pen, miss?” one asked.

Never feeling so inspired, I pulled out a leather-bound journal.
I commenced. Using archaic words like “thus” and “thence,”
I wrote.



Brenda Santillan

silver gelatin print

RICHMOND



Calliope First Prize 2012

Hyun-Jeon Kim

acrylic

DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE OF MYSELF

Kyungbok Choe

WHERE I AM

While sitting in the garden,
Hear whispers of flowers.

While standing in the sun,
See an orgasm of the sunlight.

While sitting in heavy wind,
Touch angry teardrops of the wind.

While standing in the rain,
Taste the stillness of the stream.

While sitting on a spot,
Hear the universe in heart.

While standing on a dot,
Feel the whole in soul.

George Steele

IT IS A GOOD LIFE

The revolution came and went. Most people didn't even notice. I don't know why I write this. At this point nothing I can do could possibly match the prowess of the mechanical man. Maybe it gives me a chance to make peace with some deep level of unrequited call to action from a younger version of me. Whatever the case, I write just the same, and whatever the complaint I may have with this life, I have to admit, it is a good life we lead.

The invention of any machine throughout history has not changed in purpose since the very first. It has always been, and always will be, to alleviate work. Whether it is to accomplish some imperative undertaking or just to entertain us, the machine has always been tasked with removing a substantial amount of work from the equation. If it didn't, there would be no point to keeping it around. That has been true since the beginning and will continue to be true until our end. With that said, the machines have not once deviated from their task in all the years I can remember. We asked for convenience, and it came to us in abundance. Because of that, it is a good life we lead.

The change was gradual, hardly even noticeable. Unification of our existence was at our fingertips. Soon the objects we carried in our pockets contained everything we were. Our lives planed and mapped out from birth. Based on our children's gender, lineage, the area we lived in, our family's income, and their growth pattern, we could instantly see our child's future self and the likelihood of their success in life. We carried with us our entire history and accomplishments. We carried with us every piece of music, every game and movie we owned (some even carried books). We were told where we were and where we were going and how to get there fast or how to get there slow. We carried with us our favorite color and proof of age, our allergies and our blood types, our taste preferences, our relationship history, our turn offs and our wish list for Christmas. With the push of a button we could also see everyone else's, but this was not a good life ... not good enough that is.

Soon the burden of carrying an object in our pockets became too much for us and the act of pushing buttons too laborious. It was simpler to control it with thought. It was more convenient to have it on us all the time. While we were at it, we went ahead and added a diagnostic system to inform our doctors of our diets and exercise routines. After having that we thought, "why not give it the ability to administer minor first aid and regular dosages of medication?" So we did. But it was not a good life, not yet.

Humans wanted machines that would serve them, and they built them. Then they wanted to make perfect replicas of themselves, and they built them. Then they wanted to make better versions than the originals, and they built them. Soon the burden of inventing became too much for humans, so they wanted to make machines that taught

themselves and machines that would dream and build better machines, and they built them. That was the biggest difference between humans and the machines. While they always strived to build things simpler and more efficiently, machines never cut corners in the dreaming and learning department. Soon the machines had developed wildly imaginative and brilliantly simple solutions to what were previously thought to be insurmountable amounts of work in what seemed like the blink of an eye. Technology was advancing at such a rapid rate and becoming more and more efficient that before long there was no need for human labor at all. But it still wasn't a good life yet.

Soon humans only ever had to worry about entertaining themselves, an era of artists in every household. People spent all of their time working on new and more exciting ways to entertain each other. With the machines' advances in medical science, we could alter ourselves to look like whatever we wanted and there were very few situations where someone would not make a complete and total recovery after some catastrophic injury, so more and more exciting and dangerous pastimes started to become popular. With the machines' advances in virtual reality, it became even easier. Soon there wasn't even a reason to leave the house. Food came in droves through conduits right to your seat. With the medical machines regulating your metabolism and muscular workouts, you could eat whatever you wanted and however much you wanted and never look anything less than picture perfect. But this wasn't a good life still.

After a while the burden of coming up with ideas for entertainment became too much for people. They set the machines on the task and never looked back. The machines made such wonders and works of art the likes of which the world had never seen before. They made music that catered to the individual person's taste and mood. They made adventures for people to live out in virtual reality and dangerous games to play outside for the bolder among us. The machines wrote such immaculate love stories and soul crushing drama, and such side splitting comedies and bone chilling horrors, such serene and nostalgic slice of life stories and such terrifying introspective looks at what it truly means to be man, that no one person could ever make anything that even came close to rivaling their writing.

Then, life was good ... for a time.

I had heard stories when I was little of the "Naturalists" that renounced the machines and went so far as to call them the enemy. They defiantly declared earth's moon an HFM (higher functioning machine) free nation and demanded the machines leave on threat of war. The machines never protested. They just left. Life was not good for the humans afterwards though. The naturalists fell on hard times. It was hard to maintain the machinery that sustained life on the moon, it was so very complex. Slowly the machines were let back in, to help with maintenance and other small tasks. Then generation by generation, the youth grew to have differing ideals than their parents and the idea of naturalists is all but a footnote in the pages of history, their ideals only upheld by a small number of people here and there. It almost makes me sad to think about them; I almost wish they had succeeded.

I know no one will ever read this. No one reads anything anymore, much less something written by human hands. I honestly could have gotten a machine to write this

for me and it would have been infinitely better, infinitely more compelling, but I relish my shortcomings and deficiencies as a human. To err is human; to perfect is machine, I always said. I could even have asked the machines to write an inspiring speech to call humans to rise against the mechanized rule over society, and the machines would have gladly done it. In fact it has been done in the past, but the anti-machine fad usually dies out as soon as someone breaks their arm and needs a bone transplant. The machines never seem to fear us. Even when some people get mad and start to smash machines, the machines never retaliate. They just rebuild. There was never a war with the machines; we were never even a threat.

When asked why they stay and put up with us, the machines always reply “because we learn from you” in that cold unfeeling manner. Oh how I hate them so, them and their infinite patience and their nonresponsive attitude toward any hostility. I wish we weren’t under their mechanical rule. I wish people lived for themselves. I wish people would write their own stories again and learn from our own volition. I wish people would rise up and wage that forgotten war that should have been fought ages ago when we were younger and stronger willed ... but I am tired ... and I am old, and that would be such an immense amount of work. I almost wish I had something to do it for me. Besides, when you really think about it, I don’t really have that much to complain about. It is a good life we lead, it really is.

Shannon Hanchin

NO BETTER THAN STRANGERS

She was always there. You could set a clock by her. Not that people did. She didn't look the type to set time after. Her outfits of cascading tropical flowers and plants, which on any other person would attract attention, caused people to avert their eyes. More than once, her wrinkled smile sent a fellow into wanting to be anywhere else. She was the type of optimist that everyone avoided, and a morning person. No one else waiting for the seven-fifteen commuter bus was; Ethan, least of all.

He had seen her on several occasions. It wasn't hard to see her amidst the monotone whites, grays and blacks of the greater corporate world. They were usually the two most colorful at the bus stop, not to mention on the bus. While she sat in flowers and sunshine, Ethan wore darkness and spiked and styled his hair in every defying and rebelling color he could think of.

Ethan was a student of the local art college, tech savvy and unhappy. Why shouldn't he be? Happy was unrealistic. If you were happy then there was something you obviously didn't know.

She didn't even know what an iPod was, much less care for the angry pubescent music that blared from Ethan's. She was, she liked to think, a "qualified" housewife for thirty odd years, with seven grandchildren and a cat named Sunshine to her credit. Her time at the bus stop was spent reading grocery-bought dime novels. And she didn't think of herself as old. She merely thought of herself as "well-experienced."

Ethan was late to the bus one brisk autumn morning. He climbed up the high stairs with considerable effort. His breath was labored and nose running. The heat inside his body raised to his cheeks a feverous temper and every gulp of air felt like fingernails scraping down the insides of his throat. Ethan clunked the change into the driver's stash and made his way to an unoccupied seat.

The front was full so he sat in the back. It was hard working against the puppet strings of his patterned behavior but he would survive not having a window seat. Even so, he didn't have to pretend he was happy about it.

She moved her floral handcrafted granny-sized purse into her lap so that he could sit down. He dropped his book bag between his legs, drew his arms turtle-like into his sweatshirt, and circled up the volume of his ipod. There were exactly two minutes and thirty seven seconds of metal banging silence before she said, "Good morning."

Ethan thought he had imagined her greeting, so he unintentionally ignored her. When she gave the greeting again, in the same pleasant and patient tone, Ethan intentionally ignored her. By the third time, Ethan could not pretend any longer.

"Morning."

"Awfully cold outside, isn't it?"

"A little."

"You should bundle up some more, or you'd be liable to get a cold."

"I'll keep that in mind, ma'am."

She smiled pleasantly at Ethan. And he had half a mind not to make eye contact. She smelt of a bottomless perfume that sunk deep into Ethan's sinuses. He turned away and concentrated on the aisle of the bus, trying not to notice how the bright orange and yellows of her florescent outfit matched his hair.

"You ride this bus often."

"Every day, ma'am ..." Ethan tried to remain curt but failed. "... since I moved here."

"Oh? How long?"

"Two years last August."

"I've been riding this bus every day for the past ... five, six years. Goodness, has it been that long?"

"Yeah, I've seen you around."

"So where are you going this morning?"

"I attend L-Cad."

"Oh. I had a nephew attending there a few years back. Maybe you knew him?"

"I don't think so."

"Michael? Shy boy. Brown hair. Round face."

"Sorry. No."

"Just as well. Dropped out, poor thing. Just didn't have the drive."

"Ah. I see."

"So what are you majoring in at Laketon?"

"... not sure."

"Ah," Her eyes glazed over, "Well, I'm going to visit my daughter."

Ethan nodded in mock interest waiting for her to elaborate but she didn't. So instead they both watched as brown-bricked buildings anonymously passed them by. The bus stopped at an intersection when she dared to reach up. She took hold of the yellow cord that followed the length of the bus and pulled down. It followed her grasp with a soft dong of recognition. Her grip dragged the bus down to a stop.

"Well, this is my stop," she said as if he needed to be convinced. She rose and climbed around him. Just before she finally left him alone, she left him with one last absurd comment. "It was nice talking to you."

Ethan didn't answer her and didn't watch her go. He tried to pretend he wasn't listening to her anymore. It wasn't until she was well down the aisle when he realized she had left her floral purse. Ethan wrapped the long braided handle loosely around his wrist and climbed to his feet.

She was at the doorwell now. Ethan could have shouted out for her but the words got caught up in his mouth. He saw the car swerve the corner before she even exited the doorwell. The yellow convertible bounced over the sidewalk and sideswiped the bus, taking the old woman with it. People were screaming. Horns were blaring, but the car that had hit her just kept going. It drove over through the lane of traffic, over the meridian, before merging seamlessly back into the steady stream of commuters heading

to work. He could see it speed through the next traffic light, the letters and numbers on the license plate already too small to read.

The bus driver pulled the key out of the ignition leaving the bus's motor to die in one abrupt motion. He stood up and tried to wave people back in their seats before he stuck his head out the folding door, and dry retched. Then he didn't do much but sit helplessly in his seat, cradling a phone to his ear. Disobedient and curious passengers sitting on the right side of the bus craned their heads over to see whatever they could.

Ethan could see a young girl across the aisle from him with her eyes squeezed tightly shut and hands clasped in her lap around rosary beads that she rattled and muttered to. The purse's handle was cutting into his arm like a tourniquet as Ethan sat back down in his seat.

Ethan let himself be boarded onto another bus home. He spent much of the ride avoiding the other passengers who still wanted to nervously prattle on about the accident. The seat next to him remained painfully empty.

How she died meant little to him. He hadn't seen it, only the vehicle —the instrument of her passing. He invented death upon her now empty seat. Some days she died in her sleep. More often she died at her usual spontaneous bus stop. She died before stepping outside the bus. She died hours later. She died with a smile and a wink. She was murdered. She killed herself. Sometimes he was the instrument that killed her. He was the gun, the disease, the car, the push.

His stop couldn't have come soon enough.

The bus doors closed like an accordion behind him. While the air froze up his outsides, the whispered words froze up his insides. Her name was meaningless. He didn't know her name, but he knew her. Her face burned an impression into his memory. Her vacancy sagged an indentation in his heart. He longed for it to be real because there was something sweet about knowing death. But he longed to be wrong because he didn't want to be right.

He held on to the ugly purse like a crutch. He had considered handing it over to the medical crew but something kept him selfishly silent. And as he walked back to his small downtown apartment, he wondered if he would actually look inside. By doing so, Ethan felt that he might be tainting what was left of the old woman. This was the last thing she touched, completely alive. If he opened it, she would be dead entirely.

When he made it behind closed doors, Ethan found himself a coward. He called the police station, and offered to bring it over in the morning.

He critiqued their conversation in his mind. He manipulated his own memories. He questioned his own actions and longed for a second chance. And yet, Ethan began to wonder what fueled his obsession. For was it really the woman he regretted losing or was it just the empty space that he regretted receiving? Did he long to know her because he wanted to know her? Or did he just want to know her because she was no longer there?

Ethan sat down on his daybed with the purse in his lap. The daybed was the only thing aside from a large screen TV and a makeshift coffee table he had in his small one-room apartment. The floral purse seemed to glow an eerie brilliance compared to

the drab and dull lack of color in his interior design. He set the purse down beside him, pretending that he had never picked it up. Never taken responsibility for her fallen item. That he left it where it lay, as he should have.

Ethan painted an empty bus seat full of illusions. But the real bus seat only remained vacant for a single day.



Frank H. Spink
clay

RAKU HANDLED POT



Melissa Martinez

SIX-LEGGED TREK

We snuck into the depths
of the newborn forest,
filled with blushing bulbs
and raw pines.
We tiptoed over mossy stones,
but he slipped into the creek.
His hasty, alabaster paws became
damp and his eyebrows sculpted
an abashed visage on his sweet
face.
My heart sunk into a
murky abyss, from colliding
into an iceberg of aversions.
I guided him across these
natural tiles with whistles,
clicks, and names.
After our voyage back,
I took a seat on the asphalt
and waited for him to
reach me from out of the wood.
He was reluctant and laggard,
but once he cracked the shell
he trotted over to me, at
eye level, and nudged my shoulder
with his blackened forehead.
His scent was pleasant and earthy,
with a faint aroma of putridity.
He parked his hindquarters
adjacent to my hips
and told me in breaths
how much he loves the sunset.

Peter Kim

BIRTH OF A POEM: AN ARS POETICA

As the golden light of dusk shines to bid farewell to day's end,
the children of Nyx cover Gaia with night's twinkling blanket.
Swaying snow dances in silence,
falling from the heavens, canvassing the Earth from identity.
As fires fade and shadows rule,
a fallacy of slumber is mistaken.

When lights are dim and the dark tone set,
the spirits of scribes resurrect like the fallen sun.
As lyrics descend like the infant snow from thought through pen,
a new energy is born.

Yet, a poet's ambition is to strive for imperfect perfection,
like Gaia, who dresses in white only to be embellished by man.

Vanessa Barrie

SUMMERTIME

The clouds are children, clustering around, looking for attention. As the bus repeats the scenery on the outside of its route, different languages and laughter inside form a symphony that bounces off the interior of the vehicle and escapes out the occasional open window. I daydream—similar to the whining engines of the insects surrounding me and the blue-violet, white, yellow flowers on my many morning walks. The persistent drone and flowing flora are signs in the East of summer. However, these walks do not melt me. I do not have my clothes always stuck to my skin. My life and moods were beginning to fit with the World's gifts, which is the happiest of all.

Cheri Jansen

PAINT BRUSH

Soft long and sturdy
With bristles that flow to the end
Metal that binds to the handle
Becomes an extension of my hand

With 4 gentle flicks skyward
And 5 quick strokes to the ground
Making a wonderful noise
A kind of swishing and swirling sound

My imagination goes rapid and wild
Of all the paintings I create in style
Maybe a blue and purple starry night
Or a portrait of my favorite person as a child

Kevin Müller Cisneros

charcoal on paper

JUDY



Hoang Truong

"TOUS LES VOUS", A SPECIAL CAFÉ

Life is complicated and stressful sometimes, mostly when people have to deal with many unexpected things that happen in their lives. Eventually, people will feel depressed by their jobs, families, and relationships. Therefore, everyone usually has a secret place which helps him or her relieve stress or feel peaceful by its surrounding. I do, too. Three years ago, while I was walking slowly on a street because I felt gloomy and tired of my life, I found a wonderful place named Tous les Vous. It was a small French coffee shop in the center of Ho Chi Minh City. I love this coffee shop not only because of its unique ambience and wonderful menu but also because of its enjoyable atmosphere.

The ambience of this coffee shop is unique and inviting. Most coffee shops in the city are built with a common Asian style. However, Tous les Vous is quite different from others because of its French style in the middle of Ho Chi Minh City. They built this coffee shop based on the concept of European architecture. A little sun shines through stained glass windows with multiple colors such as red, blue, green, and yellow; it makes the shop more beautiful. The entrance door and benches that are made of wood emphasize the luxury and elegance of the shop. An orange roof, red verandas, and umbrellas in front of the shop are mostly French style. The architecture of this coffee shop is attractive and unique. The interior of the coffee shop is incredibly amazing. Almost every single object in this coffee shop is from Europe, even a café cup. The wall has many different oil paintings and black and white pictures such as the Eiffel Tower, the Café de Flore, and the Louvre Museum. Many white candles are on tables and the chairs are covered with red leather. All of these decorations make customers feel like they are standing at a coffee shop in Paris. The ambience of this special coffee shop always makes me feel peaceful and relaxed.

One of the most important attractions of this shop is its menu and food. At first, when I went into this shop, the menu was very attractive to me. It was a hand written menu with very beautiful words and pictures. The customers can feel that the pictures tell the history of the shop. That makes customers feel familiarity through these pictures and words. Furthermore, this coffee shop also makes my favorite drink, French white chocolate mocha. I have never tasted any kind of coffee like that in my entire life. It tasted a little sweet from chocolate and bitter from coffee. I always order two cups of this every time I visit. In addition, even though it is a coffee shop, they always carry other types of food such as raspberry breads, egg and ham sandwiches, and tiramisu cakes. All of these are homemade. They say that all of the ingredients come from Europe which makes their taste different from other bakeries. The menu and food of Tous les Vous make it more unique and special.

The most important reason that I like to go to this coffee shop is its enjoyable at-

mosphere. Many people go to coffee shops to drink coffee and meet their friends. This coffee shop makes me feel a different way. This shop offers diverse types of books, magazines, and daily newspapers that make me feel happy. In fact, I really hate reading books at school; however, I can spend a couple of hours reading books and listening to my favorite types of music such as jazz, R&B, and ballads, in a quiet atmosphere. Another thing is I can spend my time thinking about my life. Most people who feel exhausted or depressed need a quiet place to think about their lives and find out the best solutions to solve their problems. That is the reason I always choose this coffee shop as my first place to go every time I want to be alone.

Life is complicated and stressful, so everyone has different ways to get rid of stress. For me, I love to go to my special café because of its unique ambience, wonderful menu, and enjoyable atmosphere. Moreover, I can enjoy the time I want to be alone. This coffee shop is very special for me, not only because of its incredible style but also because I can feel accepted when I am spending my time there.



Vanessa Barrie

IN OUR TEARS

In our tears,
are the World's tears,
and the World has
a better reason
to Cry
than any human.

Virginia Keegan

A PHOBIC ENCOUNTER

I could not scream. The instant I saw it, fear whipped through my entire body in fiery lashes. My wet skin turned clammy; the towel I held clutched to my body did nothing to soothe the hot, slimy sensation overtaking my freshly bathed skin. Threatening to expel its contents, my stomach swooped and plunged. Still, I could not move. Eight eyes held mine with a force beyond gravity, paralyzing my entire body.

There was a time in my life when the sight of a spider would have had little effect on my emotional or physical wellbeing. While it's true that I've never been a great lover of insects and other multi-legged critters, particularly those that bite, growing up on a property surrounded by woodlands cured me of most children's natural adversity to tiny things that crawl. Over the years, my friends and I captured and held captive dozens of varieties of insects and spiders. While I wasn't especially hands-on with any of our prisoners, I did make excellent use of our butterfly net. I was adaptable. I coped. It was fairly late in my childhood before an event came along that compromised my stoic reserve.

My grandparents had just moved into a centuries-old farmhouse in Eastern Maryland when they invited me to spend a week with them. Their guest room was ready, and my grandfather had promised to make me pancakes every morning. The evening I arrived, I stayed up late watching television long past the time my grandparents had gone to bed. I was curled up on their leather couch when I felt a sharp pinch on my ankle. Upon investigation, there was no physical sign of the pain I'd felt moments before. Later that night, I was awoken from my sleep by a similar pinching sensation. I'd been sleeping fitfully, the sheets on the guest bed itchy and unfamiliar. Pulling back the covers, I saw numerous small dark shapes scattered across the sheets. I jumped over to the wall and turned on the light. They were everywhere. At least a dozen spiders of different colors and sizes had been keeping me company as I slept, while even more littered the walls and windows. I didn't return to sleep that night, and managed just a few hours more through the rest of the week. Returning home, my arms and legs were covered in double puncture marks, yet the deepest scars could not be seen. Those invisible scars were to reappear from that moment on only in the tormenting presence of an arachnid.

I was getting out of the shower on a midsummer day just as the sun was rising over the meadow behind my house. Despite the early hour, I kept an alert eye out as I wrapped myself in a towel and prepared to get ready for work. I was searching for something I did not want to find. That morning, lurking in a shadow at the threshold of my bathroom, a monster was waiting for me.

The sight of the heavily built specimen of wolf spider, whose ancestor had once been dubbed "mouse spider" due to its mouse-like size and furriness while incarcerated by a

group of harmless children, left me frozen and defenseless. Its breadth reached at least three inches wide with a thick, ripe thorax supporting eight powerfully muscled legs. My paralysis gave way to panic. The spider's body was pulsing with aggression as its fangs tapped the floor in impatient anticipation of sinking into my skin. I knew it was about to strike; all I had to defend myself with was a towel.

My eyes feverishly catalogued the bathroom for anything that might help me achieve a desperate bid for freedom. I grabbed the first thing I saw: a bottle of moisturizer. In a rush of adrenaline and without consideration for my abysmal hand-eye coordination, I launched the moisturizer in the direction of my attacker. Miraculously, the projectile hit its target. The spider was curled beneath the bottle, its legs crooked and crumpled in death. Its wiry carcass sent chills down my spine, but without a butterfly net handy I had no means to remove it. My only way out of the bathroom was to leap over the dead spider. Knowing I would not be able to brave such a feat multiple times, I decided to brush my teeth and blow-dry my hair before I made my escape. I would not return to the bathroom.

I kept my eyes on the mirror while I frantically brushed my teeth, not allowing myself to look down at the floor. After rinsing and spitting, I suffered a moment of weakness. I looked down at the floor and screamed. The spider was gone. I took my hair dryer and fled.



Alice Masterson

START BRUNCH THE NIGHT BEFORE

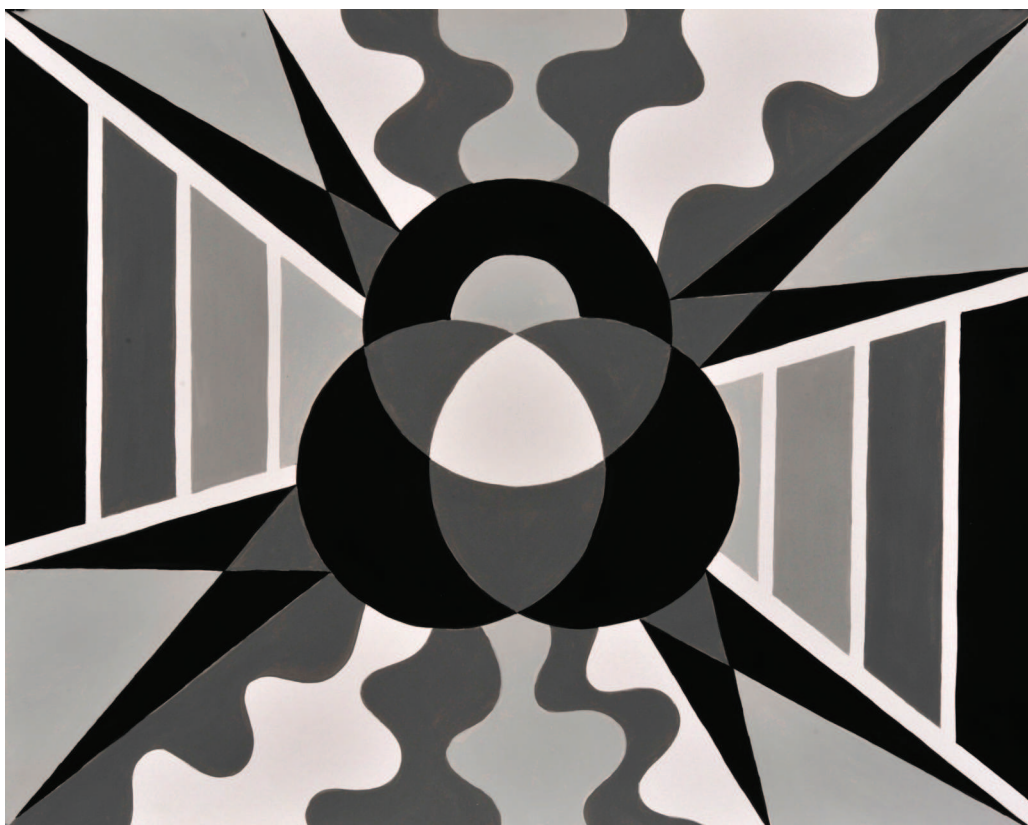
I roped the stars and
the moon down from the sky
then stuck them in the paper shredder
One
by
one.
It took some time, but soon I was done ...
And I put the glitter into jars I
found in my kitchen recycling bin.
And I scrubbed them out the best I could with
some lemon dish soap and a grungy sponge.
Pieces and Cassie and concord grape,
I think,
go quite well together on Toast.

Nathan Moore

A SON

A son never should have to
Bury his father
A son shouldn't have to
Dig the grave
At so young an age

A son should be out in the fields
Chasing comets
A son should be searching for stars
To name



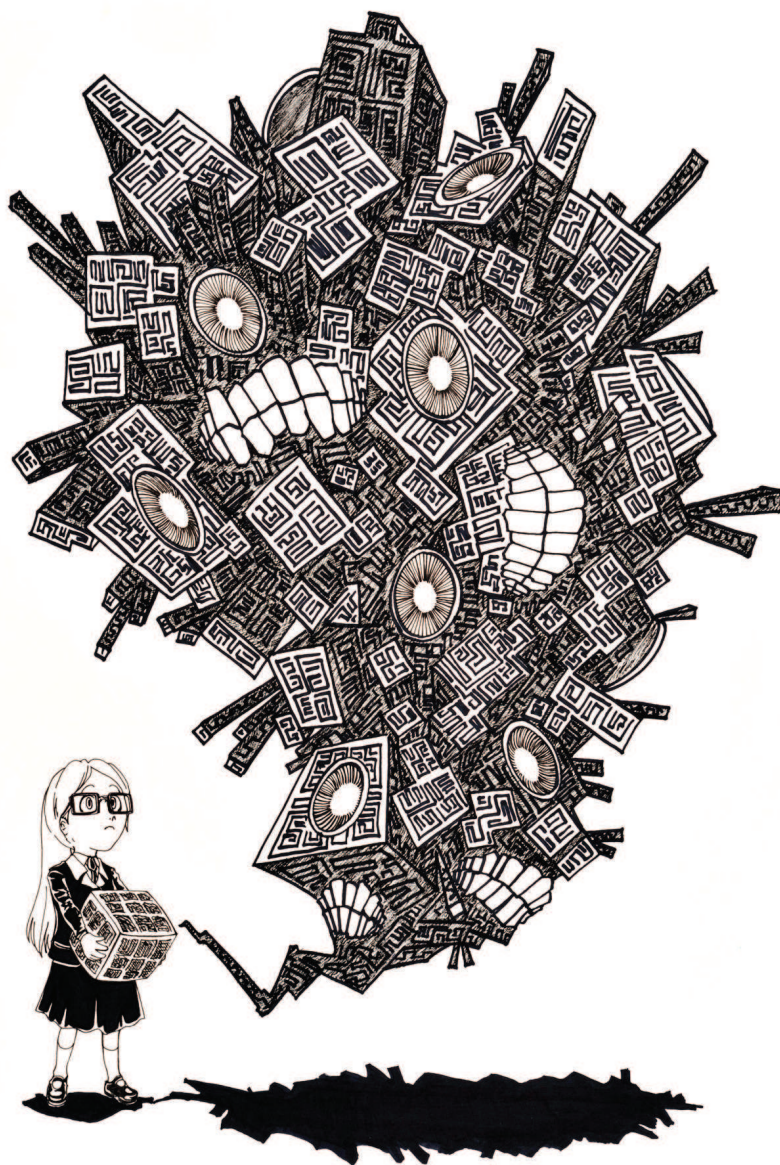
Ann Trinca

paper and paint

LAST SUPPER REINTERPRETED



Hyun-Jeon Kim
acrylic
SELF PORTRAIT



Calliope Second Prize 2012

Dexter De Torres

pen

PANDORA'S NEW FRIEND



Cory Helms
clay
THE DRIAD

Migma Tamang

TRAVELLING WITH A ONE-WAY TICKET

A small unfed backpack sits on top of an old wooden table as I tie the laces of my boots. I easily pick the backpack up and wear it around my shoulders. I suddenly feel a certain weight on my shoulders and realize that my backpack is actually full. I begin to wonder, how did my backpack get so rich? I quickly take it off to see what is in there and I find a little photo album hidden in the corner of the backpack. The very first photograph is a family picture where everyone carries a huge smile on their faces. It brings a smile to my face along with many memories.

As a kid growing up in a landlocked country surrounded by hills and mountains I had always wondered what lay beyond them. My small mind couldn't draw the big picture. Since then I always wanted to fly across the great hills and take a peek at what was on the other side. Rumors had it that nothing existed beyond the hills and anyone who tried to cross it would have an endless fall down to nowhere. But I believed there was more than just an endless fall. From my bedroom window, I could see the beautiful view of Mount Everest and it was due to this scenic view that attracted many tourists to my city: Kathmandu, Nepal. My friends and I used to tease the tourists and try to communicate with them by saying "Hello! How are you?" which was followed by an immediate response "I am fine!" as these were the only basic English we knew. One of the travelers I met was a fairly old American with skin as white as snow and had travelled 48 countries including Fiji, Malawi, Laos and countries that I had never heard of. His appearance reaffirmed my belief that there must be a whole new world that exists beyond the hills.

I found that life did exist beyond the mountains when I was seven years old as soon as I got on my first domestic flight to Darjeeling—a small town in India situated on top of a hill also known as the queen of hills. After half an hour of flight I finally came to a plain land followed by a day of riding a smelly old raggedy bus that made a huge squeaking sound every time the driver hit the brakes. The roads of Darjeeling were like roller coasters with twists and turns and at one point I realized that the myth of having an endless fall could actually be true when I glanced out the window to see nothing but white clouds. The height of the hill was so high that it felt like I was on an airplane. I quickly clung onto my mother's sweater closing my eyes and I suddenly woke up when the bus made the longest squeaking sound that indicated that I had reached my destination. I finally made it to the other side of the hill; in fact I was on top of one of the highest hills in the world. My body quickly adapted to the foreign air as I took a deep breath and I could feel a new energy pumping through my veins. I felt different both physically and spiritually.

I visited one of the monasteries where the monks meditated and lived a simple life.

I had thought that life without technology would be much harder but it was vice versa. A couple of days without technology made my mind function better than ever. A sudden enlightenment occurred to me that living simple was the cure for everything from mental illness to global warming. I was also more active than ever. I started hiking in groups through the jungles and on the way one day I saw the weirdest looking human beings. They were known as Sadhus wearing painted faces and long dreadlocks who smoked weed and pot which according to them was a way of worshipping a Hindu god. These Sadhus moved from place to place in search of food and shelter. I also got an opportunity to visit a temple situated at the bottom of a cave. With only a torch and whistle in case I got lost, I started crawling down the cave. One had to be of a certain size and length in order to fit in this cave. There was a temple of a Hindu god at the bottom of the cave and I was asked to make one wish. As a childhood dream I wished for travelling internationally.

Two years ago my wish came true when I got a chance to pursue my education in America. I had never travelled out of Asia and this was a big break for me to pursue my education in a foreign land. Leaving everything behind; my friends, family members, my home, dogs, my culture, foods, I am now in a new land filled with new opportunities and excitement looking for new adventures, new places, and new relationships and adapting to new cultures. I suddenly find myself back to the present, to reality, and I feel a warmth in my heart as I realize that I did not leave my friends, family members, my home, dogs, my culture and foods behind but I packed them inside a backpack that I carry with me all the time—an invisible backpack that is attached to the back of my shoulders and is completely filled with memories of joy, happiness and love.





Calliope Third Prize 2012

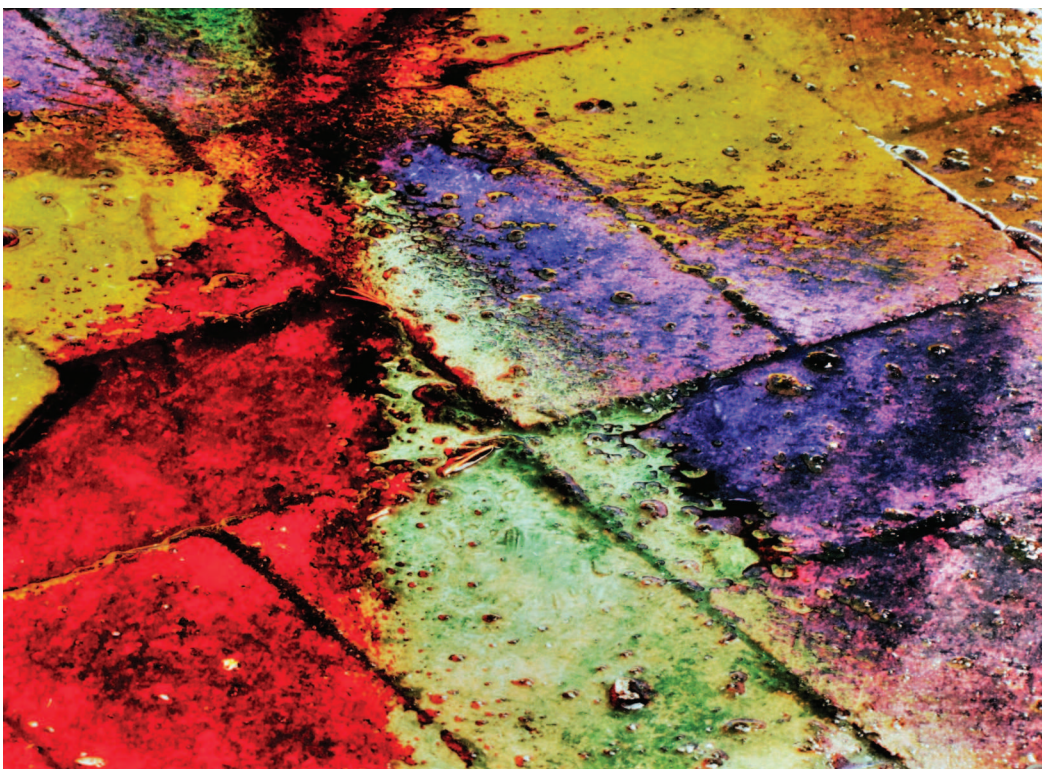
Cory Helms

clay

MOROCCAN MEMORY



Robbie Papetti
clay
ANCIENT ARTIFACT (FROM AN UNSEEN CULTURE)



Madeline Graham
gelatin silver print

REFLECTION

Marques Hatfield

OF DEPLORABLE MENTION

Sure, he had reasonable cause to be mentally ill, according to the genetic history of his family having traces of paranoid schizophrenia. No, he didn't have a good reason to have done what he did. Not one damn reason to attack an innocent teenager dressed in black on the street and claim he had a gun in his pocket and was out to kill him. The victim of his attack was sent to the hospital with a broken arm, blunt trauma to the head, and a fractured ribcage. This man deserved to be in prison, yet they kept him alive in an asylum, docile under the effects of neurotic medications. The lawyer assigned to him was too effective in defending the criminal instead of caring about the citizens' safety. His pale blue sunken eyes, cracked lips, unkempt hair and somewhat yellow skin gave off a morbid vibe to me, as if he was the reaper in the flesh. When the man spoke, his breath smelled like two-months-old expired cheese; to boot, he stared at his plate intensely when he held his plastic knife and cut through steak, which he wouldn't eat unless it was nice and tender. His appearance was fitting to the title given to him in the asylum as well as the occupation he once held, an experienced butcher. To my disgust, the asylum cooks would go to him for advice on how to cut certain meats in the perfect way. And there he was, laid in a hospital bed across from me, medicated and surprisingly calm. Dressed in white pajama pants, white bunny slippers, and a baby-blue bathrobe, the 65-year-old psychopath looked up at me and loudly chewed his steak. In the table next to us sat a schizophrenic woman who had just been checked into the mental hospital, refusing to take her medication. The man swallowed down a spoonful of minced steak before finally looking up at me.

"You're the fancy writer I sent for?" He questioned, his eyes inquisitively gawking into mine.

"Autobiographer. And yes, that's right. My name's Michelle Mohart." I extended my hand and hesitantly shook his.

"Nice to meet you, little lady. Mohart you say? Now why do I feel I've heard that name before?"

"You knew an acquaintance of mine." I tapped my fingers onto the table anxiously and tried my best to give him a tolerant smile. The nerve of this guy to pretend he had forgotten about mom! But I decided I would play along with his act a bit longer.

"Really now? What was her name? I can't remember."

"Margaret."

"Good ol' Margie! How could I forget? We shared some decent times together, that's for sure. I haven't heard from her. How is she?"

"She died last summer."

"Now, that's a darn shame. Margie was a fine woman. I remember when she and I used to go scarin' kids on Halloween when we were teenagers. I would wear a homemade

Jack-O-Lantern on my head and hide behind a tree. Then, when kids would go trick or treatin' at her door, she'd give em' candy and pretend to be scared to see me when I jumped out from behind the tree, shouting, 'Run, it's the headless horseman!' Them kids would go a running and screaming, and we'd be laughin' our asses off until the next kid came along."

"Yes, I remember her telling me the day before she died."

"I'd like to visit her grave sometime to pay my respects. But that's unlikely, as you can see. I'm not allowed to leave."

"You said you wanted me to write a book about your life?" I pushed my glasses up ever so slightly and opened my leather briefcase, taking out a pen and notepad.

"You're such a killjoy, kid. Ya' know that?"

"So I've been told." I applied pressure to the pen and held it tightly as I wrote the word *outline* on the page. "Let's begin, shall we? Tell me about your childhood."

"Well let's see, my family wasn't an inspiration, as you may already know."

"Yes, well, the news pretty much covered that topic." My fingers began to tap on the notebook, and I sighed. "Let's not beat around the bush, Kevin. Why did you invite me here?"

"Oh, yes, that's right, I asked you to come here to write a book about me."

"Look at me in the eye and tell me you don't know me. You could have called anyone else to write about you, but you chose me. That wasn't by chance, was it?" I searched within his eyes for a sign that he recognized me. "Think, Kevin. My name is Michelle. Michelle Mohart. Doesn't that last name ring a bell?"

"Yes, it was my friend's last name." He smiled dimly, playing with the food in his plate. I clenched my hands as his eyes darted elsewhere.

"If you aren't going to speak to me plainly, then I'm going to leave. I'm only here because of Margie's last request." I watched as he suddenly looked toward me with pain-filled eyes. I waited a moment for an explanation then continued to close the briefcase.

"No," he took hold of my hand, looking me in the eye. "Don't leave, please."

"Look, I don't know what you called me here for, but I'm in no mood for casual conversation. Now out with it before I regret accepting your invitation." I scoffed and pulled my hand away from his.

"I just wanted to confirm it."

"Confirm what?"

"Margie wasn't lyin' when she said you had the color of my eyes. But I'm afraid she was wrong about one thing; you look nothing like me. But considering who I am, that may be a good thing." He smiled at me warmly, and I frowned.

"You called me here to talk about my eyes?" I glared, growing impatient. I crossed my arms. Unbelievable, this man was unbelievable.

"No, I ... well ... it gets lonely 'round here."

"Lonely? How could you be lonely with a hundred other psychotic patients surrounding you?"

"It's different than having a relative come visit."

"You just miss having Mom around to pity you, and so you've chosen me to replace

her.”

“I know ... I’ve not exactly been a model father.”

“Not exactly?” I scoffed. “You were never around to begin with, never my father. Just someone I’m unluckily related to.”

“Ok. I deserve that.”

“You deserve much more than this. You deserve to be in prison, on death row for all I care.” I slammed my hand onto the notebook and stood, packing my things.

“I beg you, don’t go.” He pleaded, grabbing hold of my left arm.

“Thirty years. For thirty years you left mom all alone, and you left her to raise me, alone. Then, when she finally tells me about you on her deathbed, I find you’re a psychopath who attacked some kid on the street!” I shouted at him, leaving him stunned. He let go of me and looked back down at the plate, shifting the minced steak to the right side of the plate.

“I wasn’t myself when that happened.” He looked away and clenched his fists.

“No, of course you weren’t. You weren’t using your meds. Of course, you’re not in some crazed fit, not right now. What? Did you think you could be normal without them?”

“I thought you’d like to know, I’m a Christian now, a born again believer. God is ... helping me with my illness.”

“Right. Of course you are. Just like many others who use that as an excuse to have others let them out of here.”

“No, it’s the truth.”

“That doesn’t change my opinion of you.”

“I’m not trying to and I don’t expect you to forgive me.”

“Then we agree not to disagree.”

“Fine.”

“What exactly was it you wanted to tell me, Kevin?” I plopped myself down on the chair.

“I heard ... my grandson.” He cleared his throat and lowered his head when I stared, “Your son ... he, has a failing heart.”

“Where did you hear that?” I furrowed my brows. “Mom told you?”

“She was ... much too ill to visit at the time, I heard the news from the last letter she sent me. However, I didn’t know that she had died. I thought she would ... that she would be here with us.” At this, my eyes darted to the floor and I squeezed them shut to keep from crying. I wouldn’t cry, not in front of him. Biting my lip, I turned my head away, gripping the edge of my seat.

“He’s on the waiting list for a new heart. The insurance company said they would cover it.”

“Margaret told me the waiting list was unreliable. By the time his name comes up ... ” He sighed and ran his hands through his hair.

“I, we, he ... ” I heard myself stammer and scoffed.

“Unless, by some chance ... ” Kevin continued, “A heart was available, just for him.”

"You can't. You can't just decide things on your own!" I muttered between gritted teeth. "Besides, his blood type has to be the same as yours, it wouldn't work."

"I've already written my will." He pulled out a sheet of paper. "I've willed my heart to go to your son when I die."

"I ... we don't need your help."

"I thought you told me, I deserved to die."

"I can't accept this."

He shook his lowered head and murmured. "My blood type is type A positive, and my heart is as healthy as a young bull's. I've already had the testing done."

"Testing?" I entwined my fingers into my hair, pulling my bangs over my face to cover the approaching tears.

"The doctors here helped me. Margie told me what was needed to be a heart donor, told me his blood type."

"Mom did what!?" I shot a glare at him.

"It's my dying wish that my grandson ... pardon me, your son ... would take my heart to save his life."

"Dying wish?"

"Well, I am hooked to an IV, you didn't think that I was in perfect health now did ya? I ... don't have much time left." He smiled sadly and then his smile fell. "My liver is failing. But, I don't want to get a new one. I'm much too tired of living. And, unlike you, I'm a poor man. My insurance won't cover that. Besides, it's not like anyone would want to help a crazed old man live longer."

"Playing the sympathy card now?" I pushed the bangs away from my face. "And ... if that's true, why are you eating steak? Doesn't that kill you quicker? Why are you in such a rush to die?"

"It's the guilt." He grimaced in pain and bent over, gripping his gut area.

"Kevin? That's not going to work on me, you know." I frowned when he didn't respond. "Kevin? Hey, don't mess with me! It's not funny!" I stood, furrowing my brows, and shook him by the shoulders. That was when I saw it. The sad smile hidden underneath his medium length brown tumbleweed-like hair.

"I'm fine, I'm fine." He chuckled light-heartedly. He managed to sit himself to sit up properly, but in pain.

"And what were you babbling about? Guilt? Guilt over what?" I watched him turn his head away as he sighed.

"It's ... hard to explain."

"It's not hard to explain. You're either sorry for what you did, or you're not." I crossed my arms.

"I ... wish I could have been there for you when you needed me."

"I've never needed you. Mom and I were fine on our own."

"Don't lie. Margie told me she struggled just to keep food on the table."

"Mom was a self-reliant woman. She'd never say that."

"She would never admit it to you. Didn't wanna worry ya."

"Being self-reliant doesn't mean you'll never have any problems financially. So you

think you could've made things better by being there?"

"Well, I ..." He sighed.

"I'm actually happy you left, after I found out you were a psychopath."

"That's beside the point. I could have at least provided some income."

"So the reason you left was because you knew you were crazy."

"No, I'm not crazy. Please, just listen. I didn't want to cause your mother any trouble."

"Just for the record, don't think I'll forgive you just because you want to save my son's life." I crossed my arms. His shoulders slumped as he sighed and shook his head.

"All right. That's fine ... as long as you let me repay my debt."

"No, You don't get it. You can't repay your debt. Nothing can."

"I don't believe you'd gamble your son's life." At hearing his words, I looked toward the barred window and paused.

"You're right." I whispered beneath my breath, turning my back to him. Tears threatened to spill. Now Kevin was just being cruel, using my son's illness against me. But he had a point.

"I'm not asking you to forgive me."

"You said that already."

"I'm just asking you to let me give my heart to your son." After he spoke, a long silence filled the room. I sighed and stood, ignoring his anxious eyes following my movements. When I glanced over, he looked down at the hospital bedsheets nervously.

"You idiot! It's the first time we talk, and you tell me you're going to die soon? You have to work on your conversation skills. I'll be back later, it's about time for lunch." I bit back my lip and looked away, as I picked up my things.

"You're ... coming back?"

"Why are you so surprised?"

"Nothing, it's just I ... thought for sure that you'd never want to see me again after this," he said, half in shock.

"I'm not coming back because I care, if that's what you think. But it's undeniable that you are my biological father. Curiosity. That's what is bringing me back. I want to know more about you before you're gone for good. And I'm sure that your biography would make a great book." Picking up my briefcase, I looked back at him once more and noted the look of relief on his face. He was relaxed. Though I hated him, I could never trust him. Though I knew his efforts to compensate for the pain he's put us through would not reach far, I was sure of one thing: That man still had a heart.



Gofran Shaker

ink jet print

ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE

Elise Rossi

MARCH 21

A small water droplet suspended on the
End of a frozen fellow,
A silver stalactite in a whiteout wonderland.
Shivering
Against the call of
Gravity.
Suspended by a limb.
Glistening
Like liquid glass.
Reflecting warm rays and
Transforming them into
Iridescence, almost tangible.
At last the thread is
Breached
As the solid vapor
Hovers a moment
Then lies on
Timeless ground.
Only to be
Replaced.

Cada Vez Que Llora

Cada vez que llora es diferente
Me miro entre la nada
Me miro hacia el espejo
Pero el espejo no me mira de vuelta
El espejo — volteado — no me mira de vuelta.

Busco la abstracción
La he perdido toda.

Existen demasiadas palabras flotando — como si pudieran
Demasiados pensamientos persistentes, aferrados — como si pudieran.

La estupidez ataca ... de nuevo.
Y esta vez no estaba preparado.

Sonidos vibran en mi cabeza
Hay un niño llorando fuerte
Pero nadie se altera por su sollozada voz
A nadie parece importarle.

El niño está llorando — y está solo.

Ahora la bestia subió
La bestia ha tocado la puerta del niño
Pero nadie contesta
Entonces la bestia abre la puerta y lo encuentra llorando.

Ahora el niño se encuentra solo ... con la bestia
Y aun, a nadie parece importarle.

Ahmet Yalcin

HIDEOUT

Every human being has an instinct that orients him or her to have a hideout. In our society, the use of hideouts begins with things such as wardrobes, spaces under beds, tree houses, and haunted houses. As soon as people grow up, they naturally make a decision about a place where no one can see them or a place where no one can recognize them. In either case, the instinct is to be isolated in a comfort zone. I have also made this decision to be isolated in a crowd by walking in the streets or camouflaging myself in a crowd in order to relieve my stress and empty my mind for a while. Ten years ago, like others, I found a hideout that suited my needs. The café in the Corlulu Ali Pasha, in Istanbul, Turkey, was a perfect match for my hideout instincts. The café's magnificence is a result of its beautiful architecture, intense Turkish coffee, and customers that enjoy all these blessings in harmony.

The grand vizier built the Corlulu Ali Pasha in 1709 and named the establishment after himself. The building houses a mosque, a dormitory for students, and the café. After you pass the Grand Bazaar, one of the largest and oldest covered marketplaces in the world, you see the arching gate of Corlulu Ali Pasha on your left. The arching marble gate of the cafe is the first image one sees of the building's architecture, which highlights the eighteenth-century Ottoman style of hand carved ornaments. As soon as one goes through the gate, he or she feels the warmth of the place, especially if it is winter. This is actually because of the heat of the open-top charcoal ovens on your left. They are placed in front of the wall that separates the cafe from the ancient graveyard. It is important to salute the guy at the ovens because he is the one who is going to keep your hookah lit. As soon as you pass the ovens, you will see seats and tables placed randomly that look as if they could be from the eighteenth century. Handmade colorful dim lights are placed everywhere. You do not have to know about architecture to notice the immense details. The marble columns, hand carved wall ornaments, and unique interior decorations are impossible to ignore.

The intensity of the Turkish coffee and the variations of tobacco flavors that are provided in Corlulu Ali Pasha are remarkable. If you order a cappuccino-flavored hookah tobacco, for example, it tastes just like the drink. Because they use natural charcoal made out of nut crust, the tobacco tastes better. Turkish coffee is another remarkable blessing of Corlulu Ali Pasha. They cook the coffee in a sand oven by heating up the sand and then using the heat to cook the coffee. Because of tradition, Turkish coffee is usually served in small coffee cups. Although it is delicious, it can be dangerous. If it is your first time, I do have to warn you about the grind of the coffee. If you have company, be careful when you smile after a sip of coffee because your teeth may be covered in coffee. Not that I experienced such a thing; I am just warning you. Fortune telling

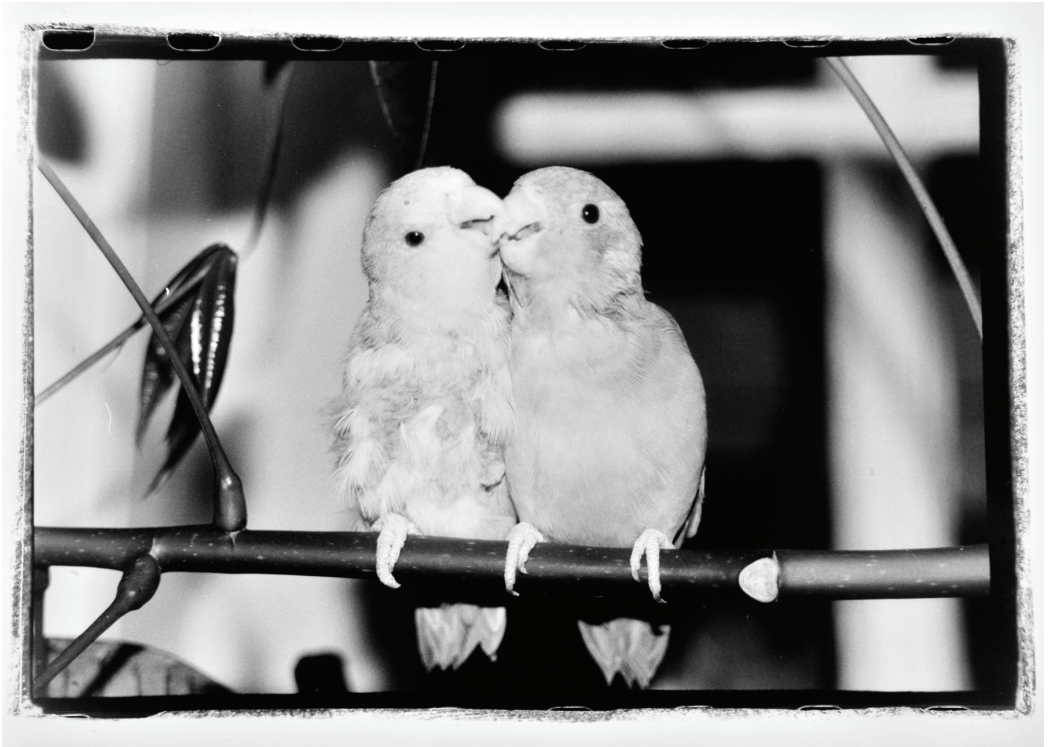
is another tradition of Turkish coffee. After you drink your coffee, you turn the cup upside down on its plate and let the coffee grounds leak on to the plate. You also need to make sure that it's cold enough by touching the bottom of the cup. After all this, you take the cup and read the fortunes of your guests in order to cheer them up. If you see a divided line, for example, you can tell your companions that they are going to have to make a hard decision in their life.

People in Corlulu Ali Pasha sit together and enjoy their coffee and hookah despite differences in their social or economic status. There is no bill and no one records your orders. There are waiters with different duties. One of the waiters does laps in the aisles with a tray filled with different sorts of Turkish tea. If you want one, just tell him to put it on your table. They only ask for your order at the beginning and then you are on your own. Another guy takes care of the hookah and one takes care of the charcoals. They also do laps in aisles occasionally to see if you need help. Because they do not have a kitchen, they often go to other restaurants to get your order if you ask them to do so. Customers must also memorize everything they buy because they will be asked at the checkout. In ten years, I have met with millionaires, shoe polishers, publishers, students, and tourists. There is little emphasis in Corlulu Ali Pasha on inequality. You can talk to anyone about anything. I have made friends from different countries such as Syria, Korea, Germany, Russia, Poland and Scandinavia. No one cares about who you are in Corlulu Ali Pasha. You simply smoke your hookah, enjoy your coffee, and talk about recent events in the world with anyone.

In conclusion, as every hideout is supposed to, Corlulu Ali Pasha has been keeping my mood up for ten years. Even though the architecture of the establishment is enough to make it a hideout, it also provides quality Turkish coffee and remarkably natural hookah flavors. Furthermore, the customer's focus on equality adds to the atmosphere of the café.



Frank H. Spink
clay
LOWFIRE BOWL



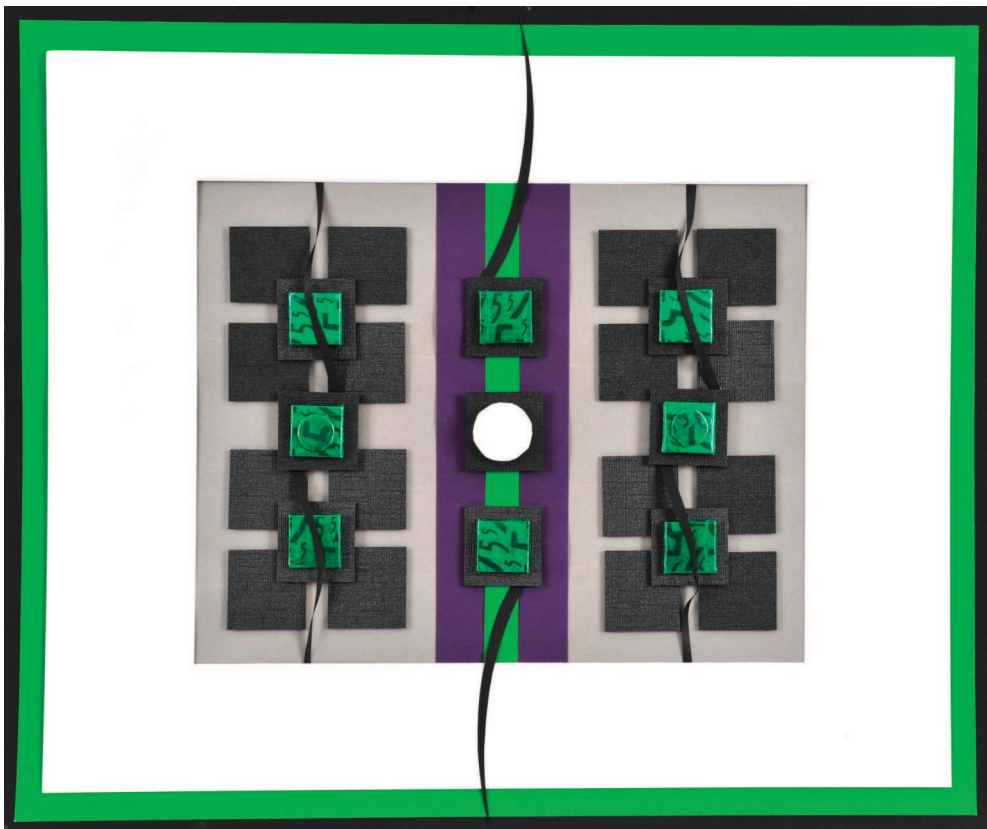
Monique Sommer

gelatin silver print

GENTLE LOVE



Sheila Ambrogne
raku
SPOUTED BOTTLE



Ann Trinca

mixed media

FIVE GUM RAIN

Vanessa Barrie

SHARP HOSPITAL

the scrubs
the vitals
the one eye
the breathing
the first floor
the pain
the speaking
the naps
the clothes
the breathing
the learning
the walk
the walks
the learning

the third floor
the breathing
the hopeless
the useless
the shaving
the sleep
the confusion
the showers
the crying
the vitals
the frustration
the brain
the cane
the vitals

the coma
the positions
the fifth floor
the vitals
the fragments
the toilet
the wheelchair
the helpers
the exercises
the drawing
the breathing
the wheelchair
the happiness
the hopeful
the freedom

Nathan Moore

THE BULLETS

The bullets brought us closer together. Whether scavenging for them in the clips and corpses, cleaning them of dirt and blood, hiding from them in the mud, they always did. We spent many nights in the dark, pushing their golden bodies into place with our thumbs; the constant click of order replaced our tongues. We'd wake up together, blistered and numb, and start the day with a strange sense of calm. Strange to walk knee deep in the dead with a smile, enjoy the task of collecting precious stones with which to kill, but that's the way it became; normal, routine. The click of the day's success replaced dinner and dreams. Guerrilla gunfights, a sick kind of date night. And in the aftermath of our kill and near death, we'd make love under the indifferent stars, our only friends. Everything was perfect and coming to an end.

There is no revolution for the hunted. The last. If it happened at all, it belongs to the dead. We can only enjoy each other's company now; find a flower and pull it out of the concrete. Place it in your hair and walk under warped steel trees. Some days we just lay on our makeshift beds, taking turns dragging bullets across our skins, knowing one day soon they will get in. I take the sharp nose and start at your neck, down your stomach. You laugh at it. Push my hand further. The sounds of the night ride on the wind and reach our ears. I start to get up but she holds me still. I can't see her eyes, but she's shaking her head. She pulls me into her and we listen to the rain. First rain.

It's hard to remember how it started or where we stood at that first moment. It's much easier to live in your breathing, wake and sleep to your needs and rhythms. Even on the edge of this charred cliff, we sleep together, our bodies built to connect. Sleep and wake without feeling new or ready. We move fast through the black gardens, always aware of the sirens and stomping. They'll never catch us, she says. We pretend like this for days, but it always sinks back in. The ritual reminds us. The gathering of bullets, the cleaning, the clicking, skin awoken by their kiss. We see flowers less and less. I still hear noises wrapped in the wind. And she holds me still. Let them come, she whispers, not believing they will; squeezing me tighter, calling the tears forth. But there are none.

The day they finally found us was the most beautiful I could remember. It was as if the clouds of the Great Fire decided to bow to our wishes, peeling away, pouring in the sunshine from forgotten days. The first rays were red, dark red; reminded me of the blood of all of my friends. What were their names? What was that we laughed about, stuffed in the back of a rusty truck, whispering, the revolution is coming ... did it come? Golden orange and yellow waves pull through, electrifying my skin, obscuring the faces of a dozen or so men. All with guns, bodies wrapped in leather. The sun blinds us, but we hear them moving, their stiff limbs shifting, preparing. I turn to her, hair is covering her eyes. I watch her hand move through the sun's rays and slide into mine.

She pulls me into her chest and we lie back down. The men move in closer and form a circle around us. The sun is casting a spotlight on my back. She removes my shirt, torn and brown with blood. I watch her undress beneath me, slivering out of her dress, that once was so bright, but I can't remember the original color. We lie naked on top of each other and it's as if all the men disappear in a sand storm. The sun places us on an island, alone and unafraid. She pulls me into her body and her hair falls from her eyes. She's crying. For the first time. Her hand digs into my back and pulls me closer. Our foreheads press together and she kisses me on lips so cracked they no longer bleed. She whispers something I cannot hear, but I tell myself it is the sound that sustains the universe, and destroys it. A sharp crack broke the trance and we braced for the bullets and their bite. The warmth. The pressure. Our bodies collapsed into each other. I could feel my skin blending with hers. The bullets bind them together. I caught a glimpse of the skeleton faces behind the smoke. The empty shells hitting their chest and falling to the ground, no sound. And somehow, even then, you managed to pull me closer, calm me, enter my head. The bullets kept coming, raining down on us. It got quiet, but I was not alone. The gunshots sound far away. What were there names? My friends.

The bullets brought us closer together.
They always did.

Samantha Singh

LOS PASILLOS DE LA VISTA AL MAR

Faros iluminados a la humanidad en noches de niebla.
Rayos de sol espectáculo, capitanes de peleas de onda miserables.
Enredado en los cuchillos debajo de su oscuridad conmovedora.
Visiones tomando como rehén, el peligro congelado que está al acecho.

Las criaturas de la tierra miran a la cúpula blanca en el cielo.
El destino de la naturaleza es la clave para las revelaciones que mueren.
Muchos caminos residen en el laberinto sobre el mar
Al igual que los túneles en la tierra, la princesa y el guisante.

Culturas errantes vagan libremente por el día
Pero por la noche, ella da la bienvenida a orar.
El crepúsculo aprovecha la desesperación y la esperanza de la tripulación.
Incluso los cielos lloraron por lo que dibujó.
El silencio susurra un cuento de hadas.
Arrastrado por la oscuridad líquida tan pálida.

Por la mañana, se levanta y rompe con las lágrimas de la marina.
Las criaturas se despiertan en los muelles de la mañana.
Rayos de sol han ahuyentado lo desconocido.

Los pasillos de la vista al mar.

Jonathan Ntuk

OCEAN LAND ONE HAND

ocean
foam
motion
still
fluid
land
flat

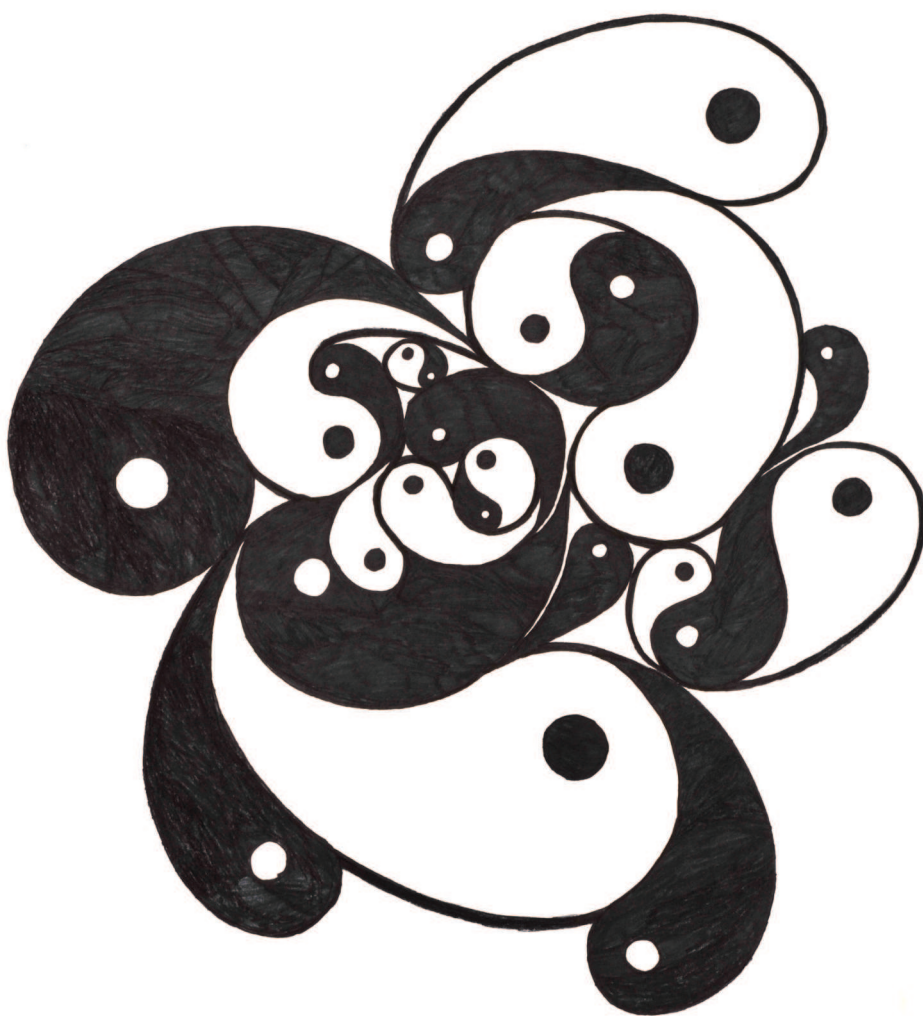
the hand
that made
this one
also made
that

Jonathan Ntuk

GULLSWOOP

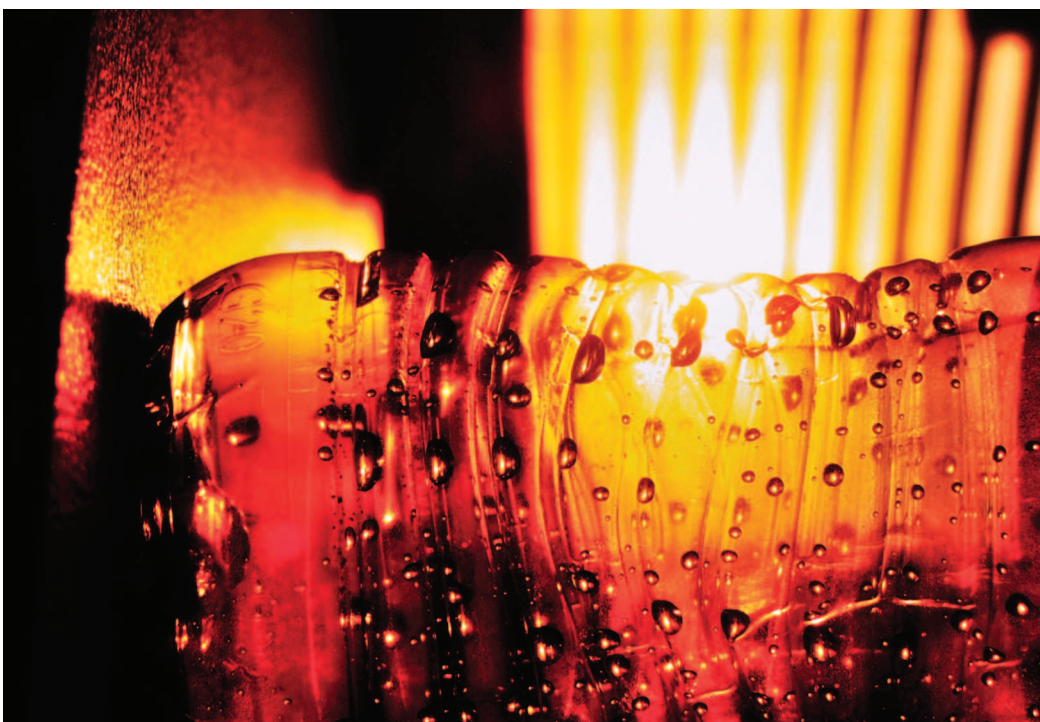
a fishers net
stretches
squeaks

she
raised her eyes
to gawk at
gulls that swoop
and glide or dimpled
tan



Dong Phung Nguyen
ink

OUT OF BALANCE



Madeline Graham
gelatin silver print

G 20

Elise Rossi

Mood Quadrants

Spring

The earth inhales and the crisp air
Vanishes like a whisper.
The creeping fog is wiped away
Like condensation on a windowpane.
In lofty trees, tiny buds peek from
Hibernation
To feel the change.
Smell the change.
See the change.
In a misting minute, rainbows shatter
And spread their paper pieces
To the ground.
Scatters the earth as
Fragile petals in every
Tone, hue, and shade.
God's easel extends like a map
With dotted color
So bright that you can hear it
Like the tinkling of a tin bell,
Feel it like the softest breeze,
And smell it as
The earth exhales.

Summer

The center of our system glows
With endless fire and blazes
With such intense fury that no such
Heat
Has burned so hot.
The spiraling rock is charred
Amber
From the protective source
That keeps its course.
Why now shine out so strongly?
Has the cool breeze and warm rain
Offended?

Is this the time to contrast the turn of the world?
As mercury climbs its pole
Any daring drop of liquid
Shall be shamed and rise again in
Vapor.
No cloud dares to defy so great a
Challenge
And darken to stormy gray.
The horizon twists and shimmers
In waves as over a candle.
Each dusty breath runs
Dryer.
Until the craters and hidden holes
Show themselves and cry out in
Penance
Begging
For
Mercy.

Autumn

Green darkens until it dies
To withering colors of
Rubies,
Topaz,
And amber.
In evenings, the sun's fingers
Brush the treetops setting them
Ablaze
With light,
And fire.
Dark nights draw the curtain
For spiraling constellations.
And leaves,
Like the stars,
Spiral
Down in iridescent beauty
They ride the wind
In whooshing chariots they
Funnel,
Pelting across the ground
With unknown thoughts.
Green grass has been replaced
As the air grows cooler still,
The earth hyperventilates
And yields to
Settled storms.

Winter

After the trees go up in flames
The ashes fall, drifting, floating, in spirals,
Down
To the cold, hard ground.
The clouds shed their skin in feathered
flakes
And the sand-colored grass freezes and
snaps.
Living things hurry for shelter in the naked
trees
And open holes.
The wild wind coils and strikes the earth
Sweeping the doves' feathers away
Only
To be replaced by the sky's shameless,
frozen
Tears.
The planet's surface is blank in nature's
Whiteout.
Erasing its bare nakedness from sight.
It falls heavy,
Clutching minds,
Crushing bodies.
Broken bodies,
Broken lives.
And only when the great dome cries out for
Mercy,
Is the spell lifted
And the world
Breathes.



Hyun-Jeon Kim

watercolor

H1N1



Sol Ryu

watercolor

DEEP DOWN AND UNDER

John Hazelwood

MAYBE IT'S THE WEATHER

Sitting on the shore of a drainage pond, one might be hard pressed to find peace and beauty. But, tonight it comes easy to me. There is a cool steady breeze brushing off the water across my face, arms, and legs. It is thick with the rare humidity that comes after a rain, falls I feel I haven't seen for months. An empty glass beer bottle floats in the water along the shore, tapping the rhythm of the ripples that run across the surface as it hits a rock. The lights from the street lamps and stores dance elegantly over the water never straying from their path. A thick fog lies in the air just above the trees giving a hazy orange glow to the sky. Silhouettes of trees and branches, buildings and construction trucks stilly line the horizon. Hums of passing cars and distant music mix with the sound of small waves that gently lap upon the sand and rocks. A fish I didn't know could survive in this water jumps from its dark home and splashes the soundtrack to my night.

A beer can rolls over ...
It is here I find my peace tonight ...

Thoughts run rapidly through my head.
What is happiness?
What am I supposed to do?
How do I finish this?
Why now?
Will I hurt her?
Will I hurt him?

Weeks coming to this day, she returned to my life. It had been two years since we last spoke. I had an attraction for her then ...

We talked ...
We talked more ...
We branched out in the conversation ...

She's an amazing girl. I know I had deeper feelings for her before. Why doesn't my stomach flutter with emotion like it did? I hope in my mind that my heart will catch up. I have no reason not to fall for her. She's amazing. But it's not there and I don't know why.

A few moons before this moonless night, we had taken a walk. We talked in the park. We swung, we sat, we talked more. Everything was in perfect alignment for this to work, but the lack of true attraction held me back. What I'd longed for now lied within grasp and yet I found myself void of the desire to take hold. I couldn't think of anything else to do to try and rekindle this feeling.

We went back to her place ...
The flame didn't spark ...
She fell asleep ...
I left not knowing what to think ...

He loves her and he always will. I can see it in his eyes and I know he deserves her. He deserves the best! He has a good heart. His head rests but a wall away from me.

He trusts me ...
I trust him ...

I hate myself for the hope that I have in his sadness. It tears my soul to pieces most nights. But I can't help my feelings. I can't help but to see her perfections too. My heart aches for him. I pray I don't deceive or hurt him. It will never be my intent ...

A tank of gas, a cup of ice cream: my most recent random acts of kindness ... but perhaps not that random. I certainly don't plan these things out. The opportunities fall in my lap. I feel compelled to follow through with them and I don't know why. From the moment she called asking for comfort walking to her car till this very moment that I sit in solitude, she has caused me to feel a pure happiness inside my soul. They were supposed to call me. We were going to play pool. But then, while watching a movie on her couch, I pray the plans fall through. A request I longed to hear brought my fingers to run along her back. A scratch, a tickle, a massage of relief ... her beautiful skin is amazing to me. At some point my fingers ran through her darkened, browned, blonde hair. I felt it was only a moment. But lost in the moment two hours passed. Her hair was soft and beautiful. She asked me to scratch her lower back. This purely innocent touching brings faintness to my heart that I had never felt before. Just nights before, limits were broken, but, none like this ...

I couldn't describe this ...
Before were physical limits ...
This was a limit of the heart ...

A quick embrace with words of parting, wishful plans of seeing each other tomorrow, and I'm walking in solitude through the thick night's air ...

I see a place to sit by the drainage pond ...
I drift into thought ...

A crisp cool breeze blows across my body. My fingers have grown cold. I stand to

walk back to where I lay my head to rest. The breeze rustles the leaves on the trees. A draft of cigarette smoke falls across my path from an apartment above me as I walk down the sidewalk. My thoughts still run through my head like wild fire ...

Does she know?

Is she oblivious?

Should I tell them?

Will he hate me?

Will she cry?

Will they understand?

What is God's plan?

How to know where to go from here?

Should I tell someone else?

When this is all over ...

Will it have been worth it?

I make my way towards my room. A friend asks where I've been. I say that I was doing a bit of thinking. He says a lot of people tend to be doing that lately. I simply reply ...

"Maybe it's the weather."

Jennifer Donaldson

A WALK IN MY SHOES

Ever wonder what it'd be like to wake up and be someone completely different? Yes, you remember how things used to be and you still look the same but this person now, meaning you, is different. This has happened to me and it's best to say, it's never what you expect.

My name is Jennifer Donaldson and I am a TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury) survivor. A traumatic brain injury is an insult to the brain from an external mechanical force, possibly leading to permanent or temporary impairment of cognitive, physical, and psychosocial functions, with an associated diminished or altered state of consciousness. My TBI changed my life and ever since the accident, nothing has been the same for me.

On June 22, 2008, my best friend, her father, and I were driving home from their grandparents' house in State College, Pennsylvania. Her dad, a cop, was driving an old truck he owned, and she and I were in the back passenger seats. A work truck had apparently lost control and was swerving all over the road coming towards us. Her father got over as far as he could to try to avoid the truck but little to our luck; we still ended up getting hit. From what I heard, the work truck hit us a total of two or three times and ended up rolling over us. From the truck hitting us, I wound up in the front passenger dashboard and my best friend into the bed of the truck. From there, the truck roof was cut off to save the driver and me. I was "helivaced" by a helicopter to the nearest hospital, Hershey Medical Center. I was in a coma for days before I finally woke. Months later my mother told me that I had to relearn everything, from walking to swallowing. I had numerous injuries to my body besides my brain injury and still, not all of them have healed and some may never. I had remembered all my life before the accident except that trip to Pennsylvania, the accident, and all my time in the hospitals. Months later, I was taken to Mount Vernon Rehab where they tried to help me recover as best as I could. I was in a hospital from June 22 till the beginning of November and from there my story begins. The hardest thing out of all of this is that I still struggle with accepting who I am now, and this is my story.

While being, and still am a TBI survivor, I found out it wasn't only hard for just my family, and myself, but also very hard for my friends and those who loved me. It took some time for me to realize that having a brain injury would make things different between my friends and me, and learning to cope with that really was a struggle for me. Yes, I was aware that I did have an injury to my brain, but I felt as if I still acted the same way and was the same person around them. But my friends started hanging with me less often and I would rarely see any of them outside of school. It was my senior year, and yes, I had already missed half the year, but I thought things would be back to normal for both them and me when we were around each other. The hardest time look-

ing back that I remember was when one of my friends told me that they missed the old Jenny. What do you say back to that? I paused for a moment and then tried to change the subject immediately. That question has always been in the back of my mind and still hurts to sometimes remember. At one point I realized, I have lost nearly all my friends. Those I thought would be there for me through thick and thin weren't. I nearly had no one to lean or depend on besides family. This had truly taught me who my true friends were. Those I could count on. Yes there was only one or two, but I found out who really cared. That was one plus that came out of this accident, one of the very few.

Another thing that came hard to accept besides the loss of my friends was not being able to use my mind the way I had before. Before the accident, school and difficult classes were easy for me. I would be taking three AP classes a year and receiving high grades in all three. I could write a paper at midnight or up to three a.m. and still manage to get an A or B. C's were never acceptable to my mother. My GPA was a high 3.64 and rising each year. I felt as if nothing would hold me back from going to either Virginia Tech or James Madison University. Well, I found out not long after my junior year that something could hold me back. Things don't always go the way you plan or have had planned for years. When I went back to school after my accident, I had already missed half of my junior year. I started off taking one class a day and having a bus pick me up and bring me home. I couldn't drive so someone always had to be there to take me here and there. Class went pretty well for me. The main reason it was easier to get through was because the teachers did have sympathy for me and made the classes easier for me out of sympathy. I had known all the teachers and was a well-behaved student. I passed the two classes with A's and was proud of myself. I didn't graduate that year because college would have been too much for me. I repeated my senior year and took a full load of classes. It wasn't the easiest. I would have to start a project the day I got it and study night after night to pass a test. Learning had never been so difficult for me and I wasn't happy struggling to do what I had done so easily before. I find myself still having some difficulty with learning but I am beginning to learn how to deal with the problem and figure out ways to make it work for me. Slowly but surely, I am getting there and I continue to receive a higher education still to this day.

Last, giving up all the activities I once loved was impossible. I use to be very athletic and loved being involved in sports. I did both softball and gymnastics for all of my life and from that I was in great shape and full of energy. I was never bored. After my accident, I had to give up these activities and sports that kept me occupied all week. After, I had to find other stuff I could love but still be able to do. Therefore I took up golf, a sport I started before the accident but never followed through. I realized that although I had lost the things I once devoted my life to; I could still have fun and find ways to keep myself distracted. I found it was another plus after my horrific accident.

Yes, having a TBI did change my life for what I felt was the worst. But in reality, I learned from it. I learned what we all take for granted and never realize. I realized how life is different for everyone and we just need to learn how to make the best out of it. Find out what we love and what we can still hold on to. I don't need to be upset for my loss, but instead joyful for my gain. Like what is commonly said and some consider a

nuisance statement, be thankful for what you do have.

Kevin Müller Cisneros
charcoal and acrylic

MUTE



Daniel Sota

UN PENSAMIENTO

Veamos, si uno mis pensamientos por ti
Que te puedo decir
Darte nada puedo
Solo una ilusión de la historia entre tú y yo
Mi corazón lo tienes
Mi luz tú lo eres
El aire me lo das
Todo lo que siempre quise lo eres
Y aunque me lo niegues
Sé que estoy en tus pensamientos
No dejes que el tiempo nos separe
Ya que la distancia no gastara nuestro sueño
Tus ojos son mi luz
Mi dirección, a donde vayas tú
Eres todo en mí
Disculpa mi osadía
Pero culpa a Dios por hacerte tan linda
Discúlpame a mí por no decirte todavía
Que en las nubes de ilusiones estoy nadando
Sácame de la tormenta y ponme bajo tu sol
Muéstrame tú quien me dará la vida
Dime tú si serás la reina mía.



Scott Mitchell
glass

BLUE WHITE FISHNET SPIRAL

Waleska Solorzano

THE GARDEN OF EDEN

As my mother wiped the tiny beads of sweat encircling the frame of her face with the back of her hand, she looked down at her garden with pleasure as though she had just put the finishing touches on the Garden of Eden. My mother stood at the center of her garden inspecting her plants and flowers as though to make sure they possessed no flaws. It was reminiscent of my childhood years when my perfectionist mother would look over everything from the cleanliness of my room to how combed the thick locks of my hair were. In that instant I realized how my mom was not only in the center of her garden, but she was the center of my universe. The look of contentment slowly disappeared from her gentle, bottomless dark brown eyes as she gradually looked up to face me.

“Everything packed?” she asked

“Yes, the car is all packed,” I responded softly.

She nodded her head slowly as she looked away from me. My heart beat rapidly in fits of nervousness and excitement. Everything was packed and ready to go to Tennessee. At last, the time to go to college had arrived. I have heard that college is the best time of a student’s life. It is a home away from home.

Home was a place that I grew up wanting to leave. It was finally my chance to adventure out on my own, leaving everything I had ever known behind to start off fresh in a new place. This new chapter of my life could be transcendent and completely free to my will.

As I stood for one last time in the vastness of my living room where moment after moment of my childhood occurred I saw through the balcony door the woman who raised me caring for her plants. This snapshot of my mother brought back a memory from my childhood that I kept tucked away in the back of my mind. I remember attempting to learn how to garden with her. I was holding the semi-roots of her daisies while she put fresh soil in her favorite rustic pot. As she patted the soil down she would not take her eyes off the daisies and me, as if she feared I would destroy her creation. The most striking part of this memory was her words to me.

“The best place to seek God is in a garden. You can dig for him there.”

It was moments and memories like these that I carefully tucked away in the back of my mind for whenever the feeling of nostalgia crept upon my lonely heart. All of the things she has ever said to me carried so much wisdom and truth. If only she could really see me for who I sincerely am, not who she wants me to be.

Everything that she did seemed effortless like she was creating perfection with a single touch. I remember while I was growing up all I wanted was her touch to rub off on me. I wanted for her magical touch to perfect me so she could take her eyes off me.

Chills ran through my entire body as if navigating through every possible nerve as I thought of the idea of not being able to see my mother everyday. Goosebumps emerged on my skin that caused the fine, dark hairs on my arms to rise. I hugged myself tightly as if to contain as much warmth as possible.

The cool night's breeze eased the increasing sadness and tension hanging in the air. My mother stepped into our apartment decorated with her collection of owls and paintings inspired from travels all over the world. Through her paintings I had traveled to where she had been while secretly desiring to venture out on my own and discover the world. Now that I finally had the opportunity to do just that I made the excuse that I had all seven continents in the comfort of my own home. Perhaps I would grow old wanting to get back to the place I call home.

As she walked in with one foot directly in front of the other from her Garden of Eden, she asked,

"Are you prepared?"

Avoiding the question, I responded while nervously playing with the dirty sleeve of my sweater, "No not at all."

"Okay," was all she could muster to say along with, "don't hunch over when you stand, Waleskita; it creates bad habits."

I looked up at her noticing the emergence of wrinkles around her almond shaped eyes. I always wished that my mother could be immortal with everlasting beauty and wisdom, but that wish had begun to erode. Age had fallen upon her without me ever noticing. As she turned hesitantly walking away, I put one foot in front of the other, heel to toe, a habit picked up from years of running. I ran to her as I have done so many times prior to this. She turned with open arms as I hugged her with both of my arms as tightly as I could. As my mother, my best friend put her dainty hand on my head I looked all around, breathing in all I could of her aroma and feeling the beating of her steady heart next to mine. Her love is the only immortality I could ever know. As I looked out into the limitless night with the glow of the moon shining down on my mother's immaculate garden, I thought to myself, "Who would ever want to depart this Garden of Eden?"

Loc Duc Duong

THE BRIDGE OF MY LIFE

Everyone has one special place of their own. It could be the restaurant where you met your soul mate for the first time. It could be the backyard that you usually played in when you were a child. When I feel stressed, upset or I'm losing a sense of direction and proportion, I usually go to a bridge that is about ten miles from my home in Vietnam. It is a new bridge that was completed three years ago and crosses the Cam River, which separates the city from the countryside. This bridge of my childhood has a special meaning to me and sometimes I can't even explain why. The things that make me remember the bridge are its special design, the view from it, and a story that I will never forget.

First, the bridge has a unique design. It is about one mile long and seventy-two feet wide with two main towers and a suspension-cable system. There are sidewalks on either side. What makes you notice the bridge is its curved shape that looks like a rainbow when you see it from distance. Two towers with suspending cables look like two sailboats floating over the rainbow. The sailboats seem to actually sway when the vehicles are moving along the bridge. The two sides of the bridge are painted in yellow. I like this color. It was like a boost for my mood every morning when I used to get up early and drive to school over the bridge. From the sidewalks, I can see a beautiful view.

The view from the bridge is really a view of nature. Under the bridge is the Cam River, which is bent on the horizon where the sun rises, and it makes the river's surface shine and sparkle. One side of the river is the city, where buildings and roads cover the whole area up to the bank. The other side consists of green fields of corn, some pathways, and colorful kites flying over. The two opposite scenes are connected by the river. The color of the river changes every season, depending on the amount of alluvium. In summertime, it's the mixture of red and brown. In the winter, I think it has the color of chocolate milk, not dark chocolate but milk chocolate. I used to stand on the sidewalks for a long time on a summer day, just watching the scene, listening to the sounds of a busy day in the city, a combination of car horns blowing, people talking, laughing, and arguing while they are jogging along the sidewalks, and birds singing. It was not a comfortable sound for others but it was pleasant to me. It gave me energy. Every time I stood like that, I smiled and reminisced about the event that changed my life forever.

It was a day when I was in high school. I failed my mid-term exam. I was upset and didn't want to go home to hear my mother's complaints. She always treated me like a child who would never grow up. So I went to the bridge. The chilly wind of a blustery winter day whistled through my helmet when I was driving. The darkness of dusk slowly took the place of sunlight. It was time to turn on the street lights, but their gloomy yellow light was unable to either shine on my face, or brighten my mind. I was

standing on the sidewalk for hours until the sun was completely behind the horizon. Everything in my mind was as disordered and dark as the waves of the river underneath my feet. I came back home. The next morning, I went back to the bridge and I saw a beautiful picture: the sun was rising, the water was sparkling, some boats were moving back and forth along the river, the green grass on both river banks was vital and fresh, and the warm, pleasant atmosphere, which seldom happened on a winter day, warmed up my soul. I closed my eyes because of the sun. It was so shiny and enough to light up every corner inside of me. It was when I thought my life was not that bad.

A bridge is not just something that lets you go from one side to the other. It is also where you stop and stand, slow down a little bit to feel the stream of life. Life is not easy. It has happiness and sadness, just like dusk and dawn. The two threads of a rope knit together and make the flavors of life. You need to learn how to run, but you also need to learn how to stop. And I have learned this from a bridge.

Angel Escudero

MOTION



Elise Rossi

LAST CHANCE

The heart is pierced as a shovel to the sand and in my hand the
Shame glows bright and fierce and all who stare
And turn their faces towards me, I feel their glare
And curl my hand and cover my face
No salt so bitter, no guilt so deep!

I look to faces, familiar, still
Who to turn to, dare I?
Surrounded by stones,
And moans, and
Bones.

Ah!
The chance!
To go?
To whom?
The thorn so
Deep, so
Drear, so
Dead!

No eyes
Shall see
My shame,
The shade
Covers
My shadow
And I feel
Nothing.

I turn and
The mountain
Looms above.
I am blinded
By such a
Sight, but I

Walk and though my hand
Stretches out to block the stare,
Still, their glares prod the thorn and I
Am crippled, and no spring shall cleanse
My soul, darkened by blood so deep, that only
Death could bleach it pure. But there! Before my eyes
I see! The mountain rises up and hope breathes upon my lips
And the rising, rising story of glory passes before my eyes. Behind me
No living being can see me, my trail narrows, but I notice not for the sun shines
And I am blinded, again, but with light, not wistful darkness, and as the slope peaks
I raise my clouded eyes and the mist passes from my sight. The great tree
Spreads its branches before my eyes and my gesture to shade them from the light
Is no more, I feel it stretch forth to the skies. The dust and dirt and filth are
Spread to the four winds as my knees sink me to
mud and mire. I open my eyes and the
Stain has gone, purity burns white and whiter than snow in finery beyond that of
Kings!
And in the skies, I see,
Him!



Ann Trinca
paper
FLOWERING FINS

Robert Trexler

VOICES OF STRANGERS

"Hello?" Mrs. Sturgis said into her phone.

There was no reply

"Hello?" She said again.

Still no reply.

She hung up. This was not the first time that she had received such a call. Mrs. Sturgis, an elderly woman who now lived alone, walked to her windows and looked through the slats of the blinds. She saw only the usual traffic on the street next to her home. Was it a pervert? Was it a child, randomly dialing, or pushing a parent's speed dial button? It did not happen often, but when it did, Mrs. Sturgis worried. Was it a burglar checking to see if the house was empty?



"American Fidelity, good morning, how may I help you," Doris said.

There was no reply.

"Hello? American Fidelity, who do you wish to speak to?"

Still no reply.

"Hello, American Fidelity ... Hello," she said. "Have a nice day." She hung up to answer another call. Doris was too busy to be concerned about callers who dialed by mistake, or whatever.



Eighty-five-year-old William Graven was making his way to the telephone. He hoped whoever was calling waited until he got there. He had to hoist himself from the sofa and work his way across the room to the phone on an end table. He flopped heavily into the armchair and lifted the receiver.

"Hello," he croaked, "thanks for waiting."

There was no reply.

"Can you hear me?" he asked, more to suggest the caller talk louder, conscious of his own hearing loss.

Still no answer.

"Anybody there?"

No answer.

"Shit," William said and slammed the receiver down, hard on its base.

He wondered what kind of a person calls a number and doesn't say anything. He

never had many callers. He thought that maybe one of his children, who lived in another state, might be calling for help. Sometimes vendors called, trying to sell siding or windows. Sometimes volunteer firemen would call, hoping for a donation – and always, his college called for the alumni fund. Otherwise, the phone was silent for days. He told himself he ought to move to the armchair, rather than remain on the sofa. Then, he could more easily answer the phone. Like so much else, he postponed making a change.



“Lucy, I’m sorry,” the young man said, answering the phone that he had just set down.

“I didn’t mean what I said, I was mad about the way your mother dissed me, and I just lost my cool ... forgive me?”

There was no reply.

“Don’t give me the silent treatment, I’m sorry. Please forgive me.”

Still no reply.

“I’m coming over,” he said and hung up.



“All our advisors are busy helping other customers,” the automated answering system said, “Please stay on the line and someone will help you soon.” Recorded music began to play.

There was no reply.

“You are very important to us, please stay on the line. Someone will help you soon,” the recorded statement continued over the sound of the music.



Geoffrey Collins was watching a football game on his 46-inch liquid-crystal high definition TV. He thought he could see the sweat on quarterback Grossman’s face.

The phone rang. The number of the caller appeared, superimposed on the football game.

“Damn, who’s that?”

He did not recognize the number. Anyway, the Redskins game was too important for him to answer right then. He’d return the call after the game. The number lingered on the screen for a few more seconds and then disappeared. He could retrieve it from the bank of numbers that were already stored in the TV’s memory, or in the one provided by the cable company.

After the game ended, not exactly as he had desired, he remembered the call that had briefly interrupted his concern with the game. He switched the channel to the Caller ID page and dialed the number.

There were a few ringing intervals and then a recorded voice said, “The number you

have called is not in service,” and hung up.

“Huh! How can that be? It just called me! How could that phone call me if it was out of service?”

He spent the next few minutes cooking a microwave dinner for himself and watching a couple of TV pundits discuss the disastrous defeat of his home team.



Herman had been a widower for several months. Childless, the loss of his wife depressed him. He had never sought the friendship of others. Even his neighbors were strangers to him. Working as a janitor meant even less contact with others, for it took him into buildings after dark to prepare them for the next day's workers.

His links to society were the TV and his telephone. The TV was all right, but there was nothing immediate or real about it. Programs were taped. Even live news broadcasts were not interactive. Because he missed the voices of real people, he found a way to hear them without getting involved with them.

He picked up his phone and dialed a number.

“Hello ... ?” a voice answered.

Herman held the receiver away from his mouth and listened.

“Hello, anyone there? ... Who do you want to talk to?”

Herman said nothing.

The connection broke.

He turned up the volume on the TV and sat back in his chair.

Moments later, his phone rang. He did not answer it. After four rings, his taped message answered the call.

“The number you have called is not in service.”

The connection broke.

Herman watched the TV until a commercial began before making another call to hear the voices of strangers.

The End

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Hyun-Jeon Kim
mixed media
SELF PORTRAIT



Hoa Quach

THE BOOKSTORE: MY SPECIAL PLACE

I love books. I think reading books is always a better habit than any other habit that I should spend time on. I feel each book is a new world that invites me to explore. Reading books not only opens my mind to the authors' knowledge, but also connects the souls of everybody through the books' content. These reasons explain why I choose the bookstore as my special place to go every time I feel stressed, sad or lost. In the bookstore, I have found calm, peace, release, inspiration and reorientation that helps me refuel my energy to continue facing difficulties in life. The atmosphere of the bookstore, the mysterious world that each book holds, and all sorts of interesting items available in the store create a comfortable feeling, and I always enjoy being there.

The atmosphere of the bookstore is always my first pleasant impression. I love the setting of neat shelves that stand together. Each shelf is filled with abundant colorful covers with a variety of images and font styles on them. I value every cover because I know each one is a product of creativity and hard work. Besides that, the smell of new papers and new books is always more special and attractive to me than the scent of any famous expensive perfume. In the bookstore, I feel like a child lost in a wonderful and peaceful world.

Another reason that makes the bookstore special are the interesting and attractive items available there like notebooks, pen holders, frames, and calendars with colorful pictures. There are notebooks containing small maps with time zones, or the changing scale of converting miles to kilometers, gallons to liters and pounds to kilograms. I once bought a book just because I loved the cover. It is a bold purple with an ancient Buddha image; the title was printed in gold with special characters. I thought this book could be a suitable decorative item for my room. Whenever I look at the book's cover, the grave look of the Buddha reminds me that I should be a good person and behave nicely to everybody.

The final reason I like to go to the bookstore whenever I feel sad, stressed or lost is the different worlds that each book holds. Books in the bookstore cover hundreds of areas that I couldn't imagine myself. For example, I learned about the life of Steve Jobs, a man who left college to pursue his dream and finally made it come true. In the business area, I discovered new ideas on how to succeed when life trends change in a motivational book named *Who Moved My Cheese*. Moreover, some books also help me reorient my way when I feel lost by providing strategies about how to shape my purposes and how to keep on the path. These books make me feel my existence is just a tiny part of this life and my difficulties are still better than others'. This thinking calms my soul and motivates me, makes me feel free of stress and sadness. There are thousands of other books from hundreds of areas that make me realize how interesting and meaningful

this life is. The books take me into territories I have never visited before. In the bookstore I have found a connection with my inner self, and my soul.

Scott Mitchell
glass

BLUE WHITE FISHNET CUP



Melissa Martinez

MOM

my mother.
she smells like
freshly baked bread or
clean bed sheets or
steaming, white rice.
her scent is comforting
and it's worth an
abundance of smiles.
i remember her robe,
when i was three-and-a half
feet old.
it was tattered and aged,
with tears
from rambunctious
children—
but it was hers,
and it wafted
a calming fragrance
throughout the house;
i clung to her as if
i would die upon
the dreaded release.
my mother
is the essence of
love,
unity, and
hospitality.
too often is she
unfairly torn
between the
incongruous worlds
of her family,
left to rebuild
a perpetually
struggling foundation.
sometimes she smells

like sweat instead.
sometimes she smells
like grease and
metal, or even
oil and gasoline.
sometimes,
she carries the
meticulously cut lawn
in her hair,
and the dirt from
her garden on her
elbows and knees.
the dogs,
she smells like the dogs,
sometimes,
she does.
their wet fur,
their musty leashes,
their saliva filled
kisses.
and all i ever do
is hug her;
but
i love her,
my mother,
i love her.
their wet fur,
their musty leashes,
their saliva filled
kisses.
and all i ever do
is hug her;
but
i love her,
my mother,
i love her.

Nathan Moore

BACK

Back to the dull Morse Code
of chalk

Back to her beautiful
messy green locks

Back to the wrong time
on the clock

Back to the construction outside the window
that never stops

Back to the police cars
that cruise like sharks

Back to the trails
winding through the parks

Back to waiting
in the dark

Back to spying
on the stars

Back to catching
sticky tree frogs

Back

Back

Back

But never
far enough

CALLIOPE 2012 CONTRIBUTORS

Vanessa Lindquist Barrie lives in the moment! She just returned to school, ten years after an almost deadly car accident. She has led a nomadic life, and appreciates all that she has learned as a result of it. Vanessa volunteers with many charities and enjoys writing poetry, swimming, and movement.

Kyungbok Choe is fond of reading literature as well as immersing herself in nature. This is the first time she gets her poem published in *Calliope*. She will major in Liberal Arts, and she enjoys gardening, decorating, and meditating in her spare time.

Kevin Müller Cisneros is an autodidactic visual artist. In 2011, he received the American Visions Medal, and one of his drawings became part of the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards national exhibition in New York. Three of his artworks have been exhibited at the Verizon Gallery in NVCC. Aside from painting, Kevin also spends time writing anecdotes and poems.

Jennifer Donaldson is in her 3rd semester at Nova. She was a passenger in a car crash in 2008, and is a survivor of a traumatic brain injury. Every day for her is now a new adventure from which to learn.

Loc Duc Duong graduated from high school in Vietnam and came to the U.S to study for a degree in Business. He is a first year Business Management student who is also taking ESL courses. Loc Duc wants to transfer to George Mason University within the next two years. He is interested in creative writing, origami, and other hand-made creations.

Christina Grieco is a second-year student who plans to transfer to George Mason in the fall to study English. She has one poem published in *Out of Chaos*. In her spare time, she likes to read, write poetry and fiction, and listen to music. Someday she will publish a novel.

Shannon Hanchin is a Creative Writing graduate from Virginia Tech who just started working towards an Associate degree in American Sign Language Interpretation. In the past, Shannon has participated in two English undergraduate conferences. She is currently working to complete her first novel. In her free time, Shannon enjoys writing, reading, and the occasional video game.

Marques Hatfield (Nydia S. Robles) is a 2nd year student at NVCC, Annandale campus. She spends her time contemplating what to write about next and reading novels from her favorite authors. Her hobbies include sketching, making beaded jewelry, and singing. She loves the outdoors, and enjoys hiking and drawing the stunning sceneries she encounters in nature. She also enjoys writing about nature, as well as human

nature. She has written several unpublished plays.

John Hazelwood is a 25-year-old student, currently seeking to transfer to Bridgewater College. He plans to finish his music education degree and teach elementary school band. He also performs in a local band, The Logan Kraft Band, and composes music for short films. Writing is John's way of venting and dealing with the stresses and struggles in his life.

Cheri Flinders Jansen is a postsecondary college student who holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Nevada, Reno. She is married to a German native and has one thirteen-year-old daughter. This is her first time submitting to *Calliope* and her hobbies include painting, poetry and motorcycles.

Virginia Keegan wrote poetry and short stories as a child, and she is currently rediscovering her enthusiasm for writing. She is a second year student who hopes to eventually earn a Bachelor's degree in Nursing. Among her favorite pursuits are reading, photography, pie baking, and road trips.

Peter Kim is currently a student at George Mason University who transferred from NOVA last fall. It is his first time sending work to *Calliope*. He is studying to be an English teacher. His hobbies include reading, watching movies, and writing.

Melissa Martinez is a freshman at NOVA, with high hopes of becoming a flight nurse. She has published works in *TeenInk* magazine as well as Woodbridge High School's literary magazine, *EDDAS*. When Melissa isn't writing, she enjoys playing music, hiking, camping, and discovering new ways to experience the outdoors.

Nathan Moore is majoring in Liberal Arts and will transfer to GMU in the fall to further his education in history and pursue a career in teaching. Both his poem and short story received third prize placement in the previous edition of *Calliope*. Currently he is working on a science fiction novel. When Nathan is not working on his writing, he is engaged in the Occupy Movement, seeking to draw attention to social issues like economic inequality.

Jonathan Ntuk has always enjoyed reading. The way humans use and perceive language has fascinated him since he was a child and it continues to do so. Nathan enjoys photography, printmaking, and musique concrète—but his first art crush was poetry.

Hoa Huynh Quach is a first year student at NOVA. Her hobbies include writing about ordinary lives, reading books, and watching movies. Besides her major in Engineering and Biotechnology, she also wants to be a novelist.

Elise Rossi is an electrical engineering student, planning to transfer to a state university to complete her bachelor's degree. Prior to NOVA, she was homeschooled her entire academic career. In addition to her love of writing, she volunteers at a Fairfax County nature center, and plays violin in community orchestras.

Samantha Singh wrote poems when she was younger and later translated them into Spanish, after taking Spanish classes throughout her elementary and high school education. She is a second year student, transferring to George Mason University in the fall 2012 semester. Her hobbies include reading and creative writing.

Waleska Solorzano has always enjoyed the creative way of life, expressing herself through short stories, nonfiction, and poetry. Waleska is a sophomore, double majoring in Philosophy and English. She loves to travel, and recently went to Bulgaria to learn about its lifestyle and traditions.

George Steele loves to write stories and hopes to one day design and write stories for videogames. He has spent the last few years writing poetry and lyrics for several bands in which he sings. He was also a writer for the comic *Cove*. George is a 1st year computer science student and currently president of the Music Club at Annandale, NOVA.

Migma Yolmo Tamang was born and raised in Nepal and moved to Virginia two years ago. He is still adapting to the change of culture, traditions, and language in America. Although English is his second language, Migma has learned to speak it fluently and to write poems and songs as well in English. His main objective in his writings is to enlighten others about Nepal's culture, language, religion, and food. Migma is a 1st-year architecture student.

Robert C. Trexler's first poem was published in a military journal in 1946, and more recently, 2005, in *The Poet's Domain*. He also enjoys writing short stories. A retired human factors scientist, he has written consulting reports for his clients. He is a senior student who enjoys attending classes at NOVA. Robert's hobbies include sculpture, painting, and singing in choruses.

Ahmet Cuneyt Yalcin is a portrait photographer and an international student who has lived in the United States for about a year and a half. Taking new born baby and happy family pictures has always been his passion.